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FUNKIFYING THE CLÁVE

AFRO-CUBAN GROOVES FOR BASS AND DRUMS

by Lincoln Goines
and Robby Ameen

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FUNKIFYING THE CLÁVE

AFRO-CUBAN GROOVES FOR BASS AND DRUMS

by Lincoln Goines
and Robby Ameen

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Robby Ameen Drums

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Lincoln Goines Bass
Robby Ameen Drums

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–Bill O'Connell–
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Mike Stern Guitar
Lincoln Goines Bass
Robby Ameen Drums

All bass and drum examples played by Lincoln Goines and Robby Ameen.
Recorded at M & I Recording, New York City, Feburary 7 and 16, 1990.
Engineered by **Richard Kaye.**

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We would like to dedicate this project to our parents May and Lane Ameen and Warren and Wanda Goines.

– Linda Goines – Robby Ameen

INTRODUCTION

Funkifying the Clave: Afro-Cuban Grooves for Bass and Drums attempts to provide drummers and bass players with an understanding of the application of Afro-Cuban rhythms to contemporary jazz, funk and rock. We decided that the project should be a joint bass and drum book because the key to understanding and executing these types of feels comes from each player's awareness of what the other is doing. In seeing how both parts work together, it is possible to develop a feel for the particular rhythmic relationship that occurs in this type of music, thus enabling you to "funkify" your own grooves.

The intangible element within this music often lies in its "swing," or the ability to play in between triplets and 8th-notes. This swing aspect of the music is apparent in all of its forms and applications, but is certainly most pronounced in the folkloric context. It is the same distinction that occurs in jazz time with the ride cymbal beat and the part of the pulse the walking bass sits upon. As with jazz, there really is no substitute for listening and the reader should refer to the discography at the end of the book to learn more about traditional and modern Afro-Cuban and salsa feels.

To help interpret the rhythms in this book, we have included a cassette tape of the musical examples. Before each example a brief introduction is given, including an example number. These *audio cues* are found inside the dark grey boxes above each musical example. In the book you may want to write in specific tape cues corresponding to the counter on your cassette player in the major sections of the book (or before each exercise) to help you reference the tape quickly.

The book begins by breaking down the two elements most crucial to the understanding Latin music: *clave and tumbao.* Chapter one will provide a historical background of Afro-Cuban music, in particular leading up to the music commonly known as *salsa*. The emphasis will be on the traditional and essential roles of the instruments, including the percussion section. The remainder of the book will explain five basic Afro-Cuban rhythms: *songo, guaguanco, 6/8, cha-cha and mozambique.* In addition to showing these grooves in their purer forms, we will integrate them into our own style.

At the end of the book are six band tunes which incorporate many of the musical possibilities discussed in each chapter. Each tune has a two stave chart consisting of the bass and drum parts. In addition we have provided play-along versions of each song minus either bass or drums. An informal discussion of each song appears at the end of the book.

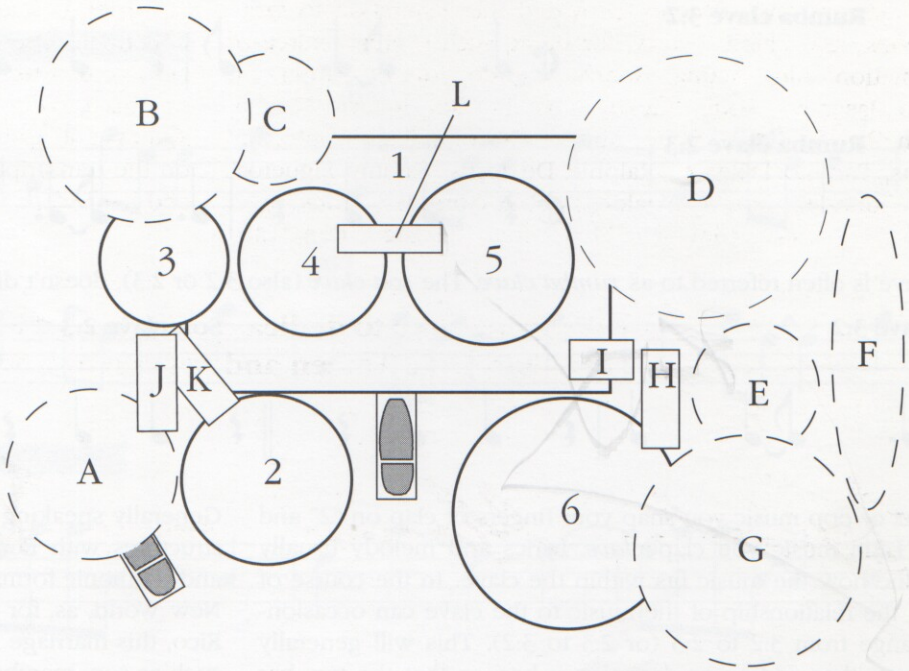
It is not the intention of this book to provide the reader with the complete or definitive background in traditional Latin music.* Rather, we are using the music as a departure point towards developing some new feels without losing sight of the past.

Note: The music examples and text relating to bass are shaded in light grey to help differentiate them from the drum examples and text.

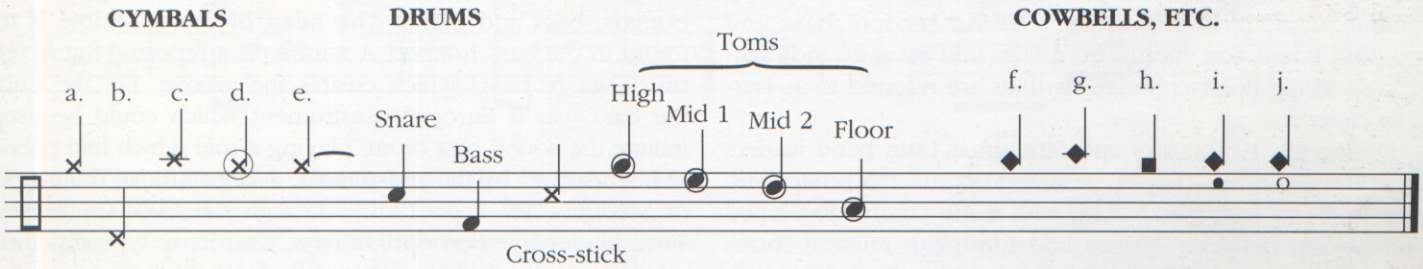
*For an in-depth study of traditional Afro-Cuban rhythms, including a glossary, (covering many of the terms used here) bibliography, and discography, refer to ***Afro-Cuban Rhythms for Drumset*** by Frank Malabe and Bob Weiner, also available from Manhattan Music/DCI Video.

DRUM AND CYMBAL SET-UP

1. 22" x 16" bass drum
2 6½" x 14" or 3½" x 14" brass snare
3. 8" x 10" tom
4. 10" x 12" tom
5. 11" x 13" tom
6. 16" x 16" tom
A. 14" AA regular hi-hats
B. 15" AA thin crash
C. 12" HH thin splash
D. 20" AA Sound Control Ride
E. 13" AA hi-hats
F. 20" AA Chinese
G. 16" HH thin crash
H. Mambo bell
I. Cha-cha bell
J. woodblock
K. Mambo bell
L. Crasher

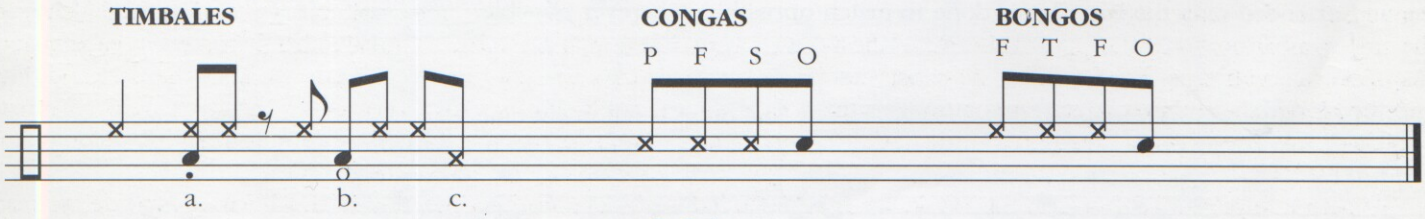


DRUM KEY



a. Ride or hi-hat
b. Hi-hat w/foot
c. Right hand hi-hat (x-hat)
d. Cymbal bell
e. Crash cymbal

f. Mambo bell
g. Cha-cha bell
h. Woodblock
i. High pitch (stacatto tone)
j. Low pitch (open tone)



a. Finger on head, muffled tone
b. Open tone w/fingers
c. Side of other timbale

P=Palm
F=Fingers
S=Slap
O=Open

F=Fingers
T=Thumb
O=Open

BASS KEY

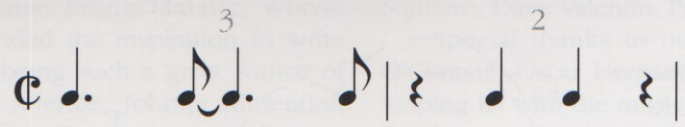
T=Thumb
P=Pluck
H=Hammered with left hand
X=Muted ghost notes

Numbers under notes are suggested left hand fingerings.

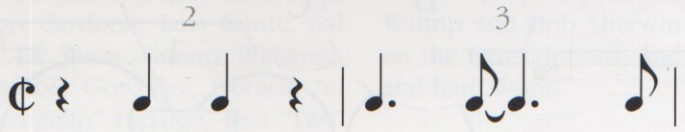
CHAPTER ONE: CLAVE AND TUMBAO

Just as the most crucial element of rock and funk playing is in the backbeat, Afro-Cuban music is all centered around the *clave,* which incidentally, is Spanish for "key." The clave is an interchangeable two-bar rhythm to which all other rhythms must relate, whether as "3:2" or "2:3."

Rumba clave 3:2

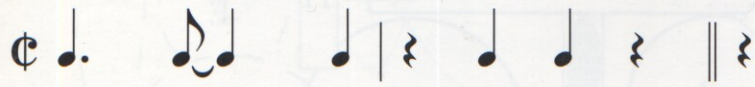


Rumba clave 2:3



This clave is often referred to as *rumba clave.* The *son clave* (also 3:2 or 2:3), doesn't displace the last 8th-note.

Son clave 3:2



Son clave 2:3

If in jazz or pop music you snap your fingers or clap on "2" and "4," in Latin music you clap *clave.* Lyrics and melody usually determine how the music fits within the clave. In the course of a song, the relationship of the music to the clave can occasionally change from 3:2 to 2:3 (or 2:3 to 3:2). This will generally occur by either adding or dropping a bar, so that the two-bar clave itself is never simply reversed. By listening to the music of the idiom, you will come to understand how to hear what side of the clave a tune feels better on, and this will affect everything the band plays, including the percussion section, bass and piano, lead vocals and chorus, horn lines and accents, and finally solo phrasing. Poorly phrased rhythms are referred to as *crucao,* or crossed.

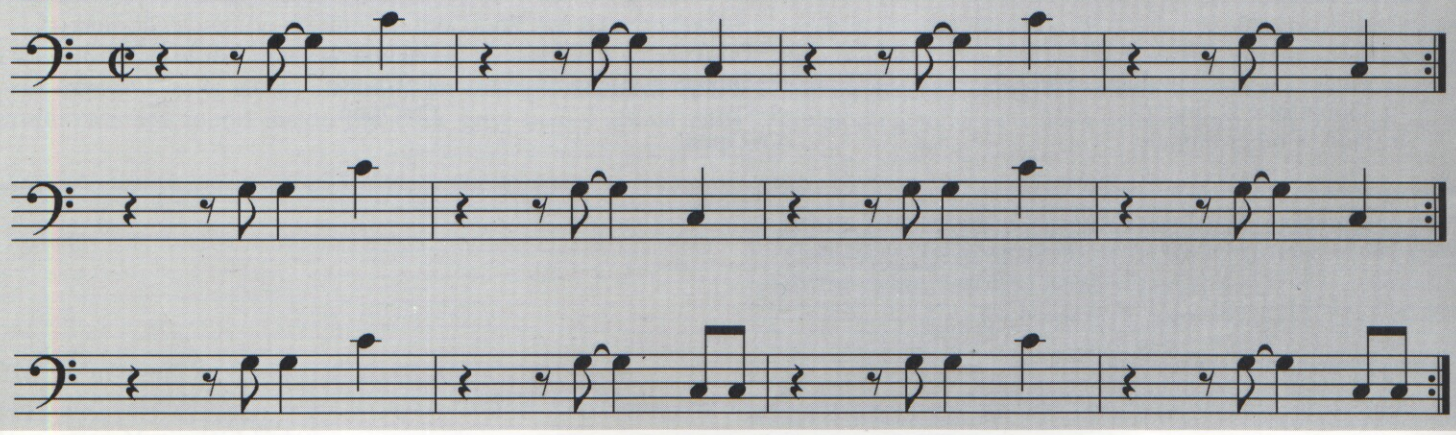
During the 1930's, 40's and 50's, great Latin band leaders such as Israel "Cachao" Lopez, Arsenio Rodriguez, Machito, Tito Puente and Tito Rodriguez, along with many others, developed an integration between African and European musical forms which had previously been for the most part segregated. Generally speaking, these musicians combined African rhythmic structures with European harmonies, although African melodic and harmonic forms also played a role in the black music of the New World, as, for example, in blues music. In Cuba and Puerto Rico, this marriage led to a variety of musical styles and dances, such as son, mambo, guajira, bomba, plena, cha-cha, rumba and many others which today make up what is commonly known as salsa.

In salsa, the rhythm section consists of congas, timbales, bongos, bass and piano. The heart of the ensemble is to be found in the bass *tumbao.* A tumbao is a repeated figure (either on conga or bass) which creates the groove. For the Cubans, the bass was a European instrument which could be used to imitate the sound of a drum, playing a role which had previously been served by the *marimbula,* a large African thumb piano, or a *botija* (bass notes blown through a bottle). The music has since been played on upright bass, electric, or typically in many salsa bands, an electric upright called a "baby bass."

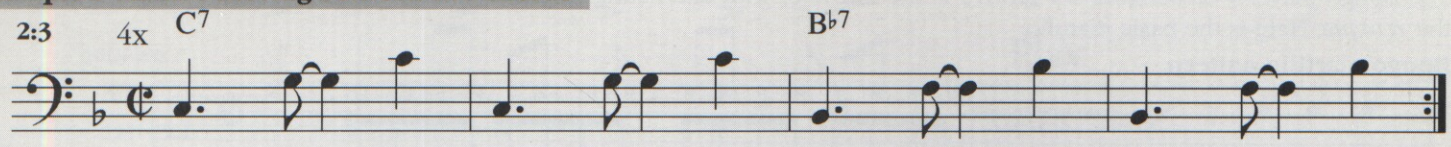
The following traditional examples are written as they would be seen in an actual Latin bass chart; however, note how in some of the audio examples the notes on the fourth beat are played long and extended over the bar. This is done to match up with the conga tumbao. The attitude given this note by the bassist will effect the swing of the entire band. To make the notes fat and percussive, I usually use the lower, thicker strings [E,A,D] wherever possible.

Example 1 This is a mambo with three variations The pulse is felt in cut-time.

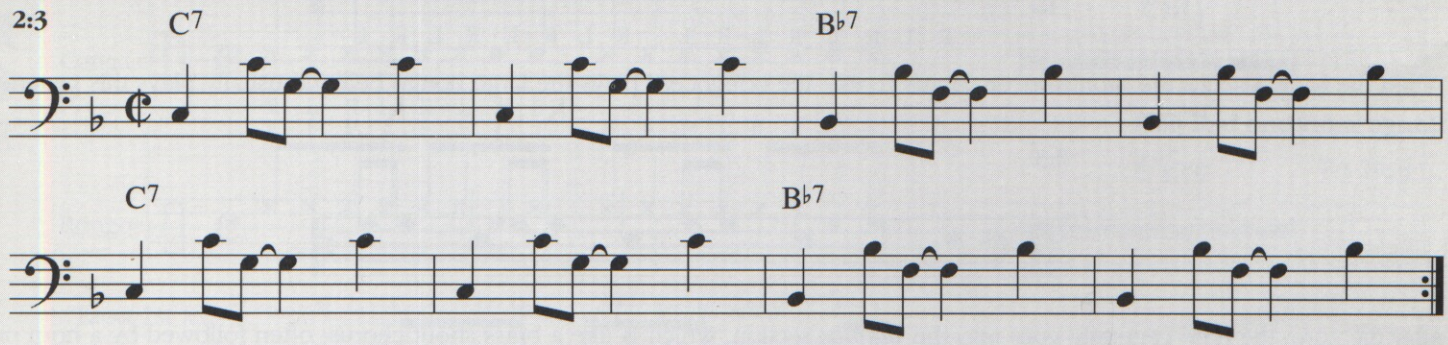
2:3



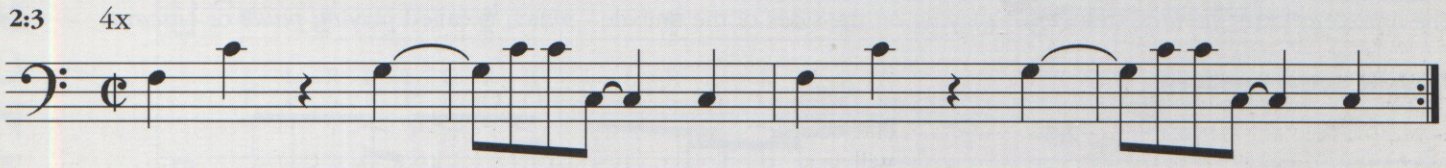
Example 2 Mambo moving between two chords



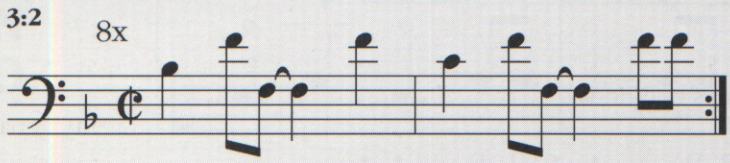
Example 3 Son Montuno moving between two chords



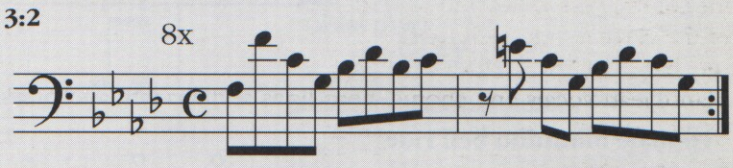
Example 4 Son Montuno, Bobby Rodriguez style



Example 5 Guaracha

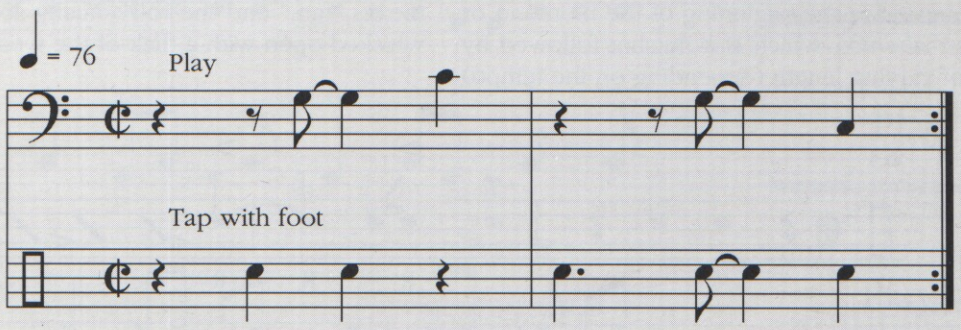


Example 6 Guajira



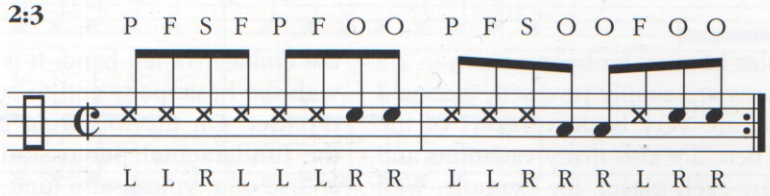
One way to internalize the clave is to practice tapping it with your foot while playing a tumbao. This is a method used by many Latin musicians (most notably Bobby Rodriguez the great bassist with Tito Puente) and is an excellent independence exercise which really helps lock in the groove. The emphasis here is on accuracy, not speed. Begin with a medium tempo on the metronome (quarter-note = 76), then add the clave with your foot and gradually blend in the tumbao. The trick is to get the tumbao syncopated with the 2-side of the clave, in sequential order: foot–right hand, foot–right hand (note: on the 3-side of the clave, the foot and hand fall in unison).

Bass tumbao independence exercise



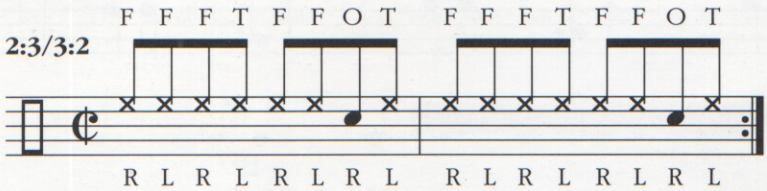
Now it is time to consider the basic rhythms the percussion section lays down in a typical salsa tune. First, there is the basic conga tumbao (or *masacote*) played on one, two or more drums: (note the low drum on the 3-side of the clave)

Conga tumbao



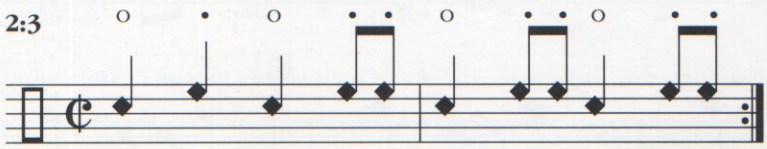
The bongo player's–or *bongocero's*–groove is the *martillo*, with alternating riffs conversing with the singer, which is known as the *repique*. Here is the basic martillo:

Bongo martillo pattern



When the song reaches the *montuno*, or chorus (*coro*), the bongocero plays the large bongo bell and usually plays this pattern:

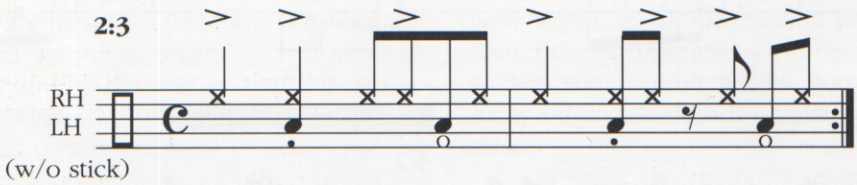
Bongo montuno bell part



After the coro, the tune generally goes into the *mambo* section, which is like a brass shout chorus, often followed by a horn or percussion solo. The bongocero will now play on his bell the rhythm the timbale player–or *timbalero*–was playing on the side of his drum during the verse.

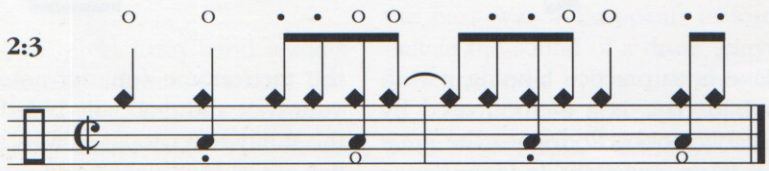
The timbalero starts the tune (the verse) playing on the sides of the timbale—which is called playing *paila*, or *cascara*:

Timbale cascara pattern

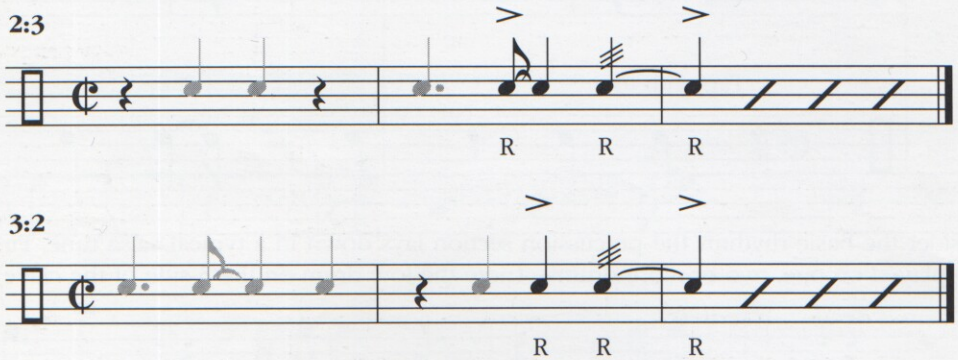


For the coro, the timbalero moves to his mambo bell and plays this bell-ride:

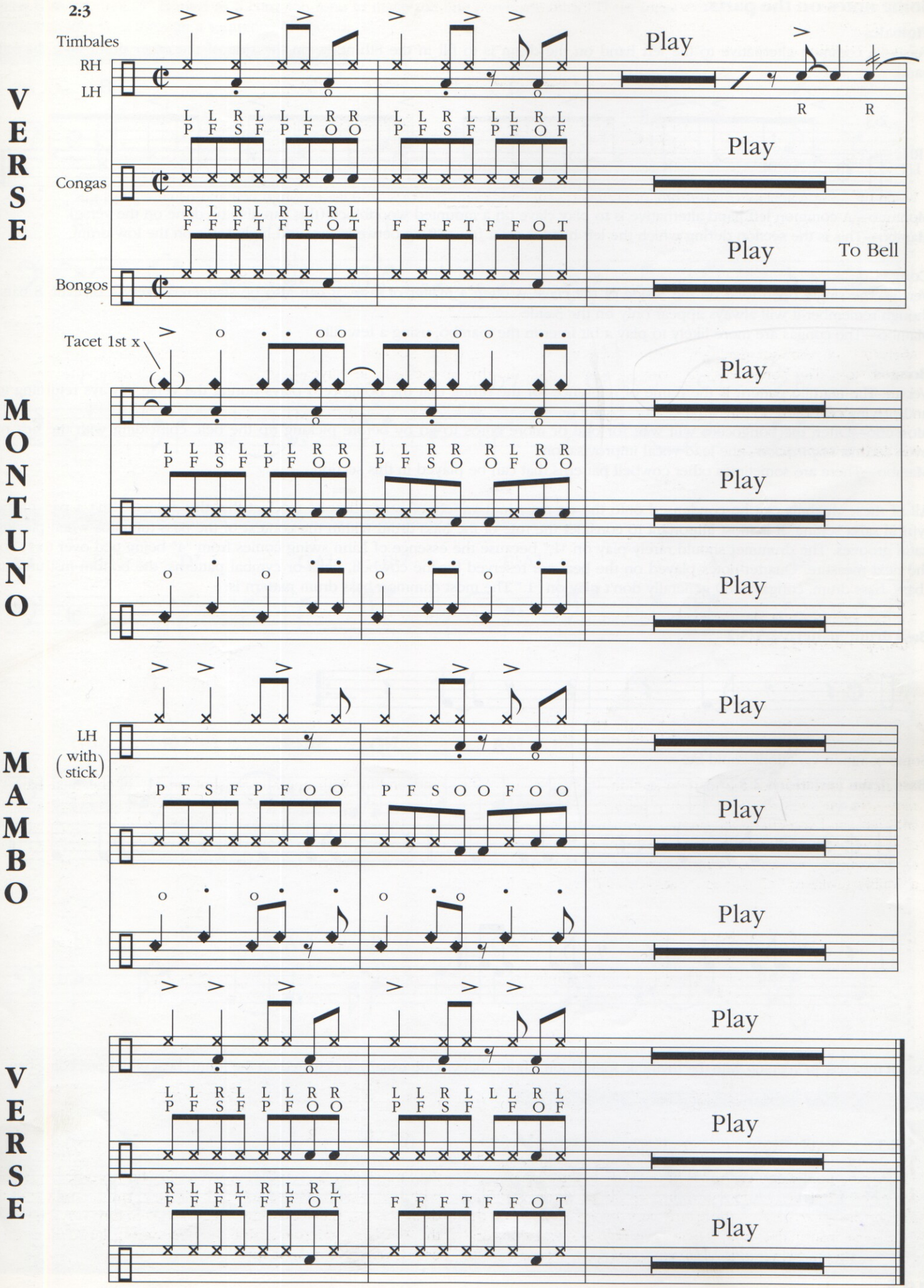
Timbale montuno bell ride



When the tune reaches the mambo section, the timbalero often moves to the cymbal, once again playing the cascara pattern with left hand accents on the drums. Another important function of the timbales is to announce the beginning of the montuno or other sections with an *abanico*, which is a rimshot followed by a double-stroke roll of varying length (depending on the tempo) and ending with another rimshot on "1" of the next bar. The abanico is traditionally used to signal the introduction of a cowbell pattern on the timbales. Interestingly enough, abanico means "fan," and the roll actually sounds a lot like a fan being whisked open with a flick of the wrist.



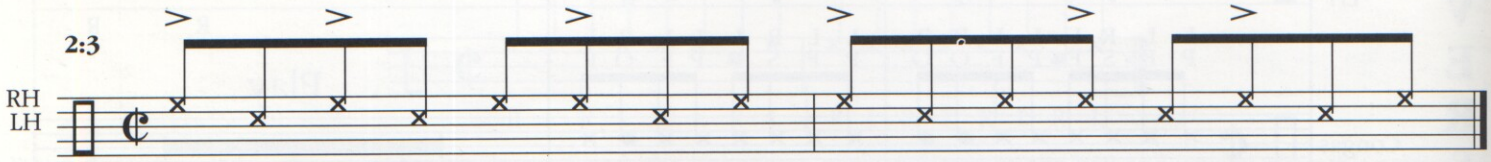
All of these percussion examples have so far been written in 2:3 clave; for 3:2 clave, the measures are simply reversed. It should also be understood that these are very basic versions of the parts these instruments play. There are also many variations and nuances always being added by each player, for example, with the timbalero's left hand. It is important, however, to be familiar with the basic parts and to see how they can be applied to the drumset. On the following page is a skeleton transcription of the fundamental percussion section parts played during the course of a typical salsa tune:


2:3
Timbales
RH
LH
VERSE
Congas
Bongos
Play
To Bell
Tacet 1st x
MONTUNO
LH
(with stick)
MAMBO
VERSE

Some notes on the parts:

Timbales

Verse—A common alternative to the left hand on the drum is to fill in the 8th-notes on the side of the other drum with the left hand.



Montuno—A common left hand alternative is to play clave on a mounted woodblock (this can also be done on the verse).
Mambo—This is the section during which the left hand is most free, riffing between low and high notes on the low drum.

Congas

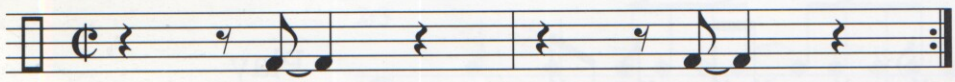
Verse—The single open tone on the 3-side of the clave is often a matter of taste; it can also be staggered every 4 or even 8 bars, though remember it will always appear only on the 3-side.
Mambo—The congas are more likely to play a bit freer in the mambo, using a few fills.

Bongos

Verse—The martillo pattern is the frame of reference for the riffing that the bongocero plays during the verse, always returning to and playing off of it.
Montuno—Often the bongocero will wait for one or more coros to go by before picking up the bell, coinciding with the first or even second *inspiracion*—the lead vocal improvisation.
Mambo—There are sometimes other cowbell patterns that can be played in this section.

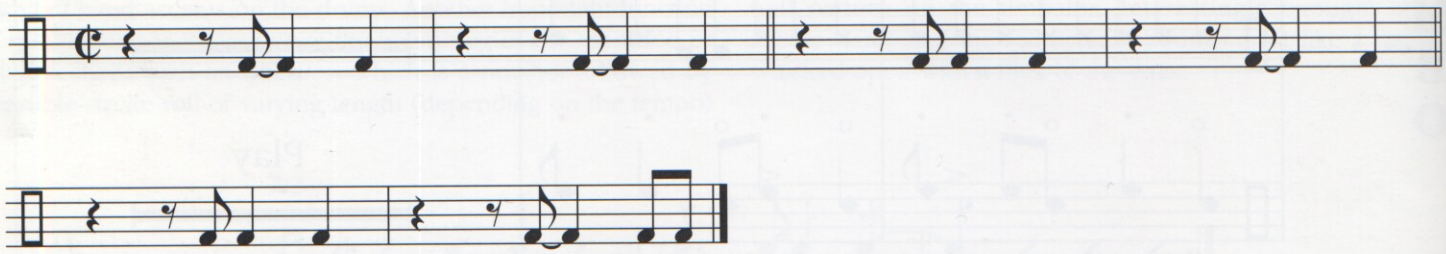
All of these rhythms can be condensed onto the drumset in a variety of ways, despite the fact that the drumset isn't a part of the typical salsa setting. It is most important to consider the role of the bass drum within the context of the bass tumbaos when playing Latin grooves. The drummer should rarely play on "1," because the essence of Latin swing comes from "4" being tied over to "1" of the next measure. Quarter-notes played on the beat are reserved for the cowbell, paila or cymbal patterns; the bottom instruments (bass, bass drum, congas, etc.) generally don't play on "1." The most common bass drum pattern is:

Bass drum pattern 2:3/3:2



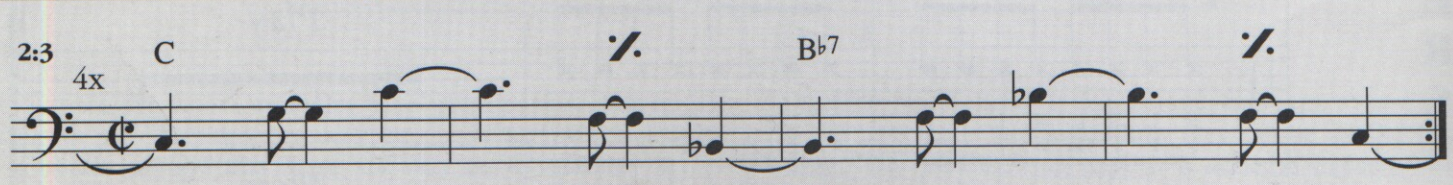
Some common variations could be:

Bass drum variations 2:3



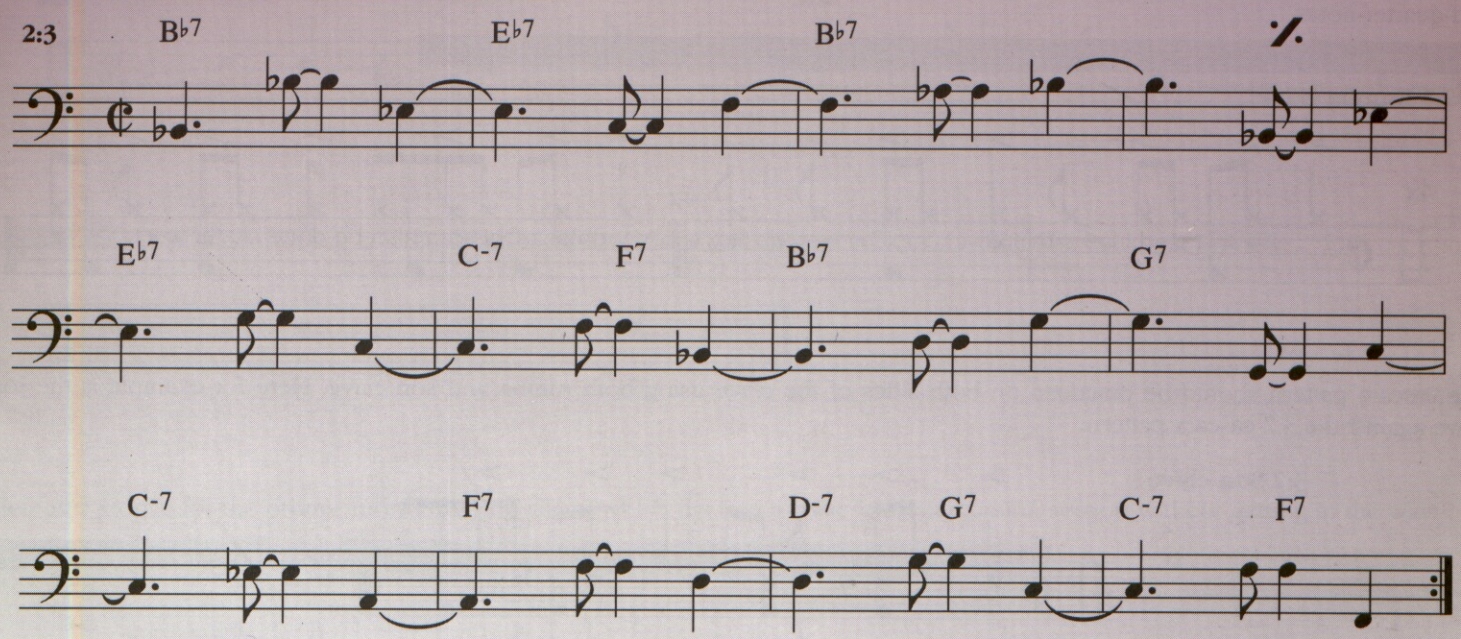
As for the bass, in keeping with the rhythmic foundation, chord changes are usually anticipated on the fourth beat of the preceding bar:

Example 7 Bass tumbao moving between two chords

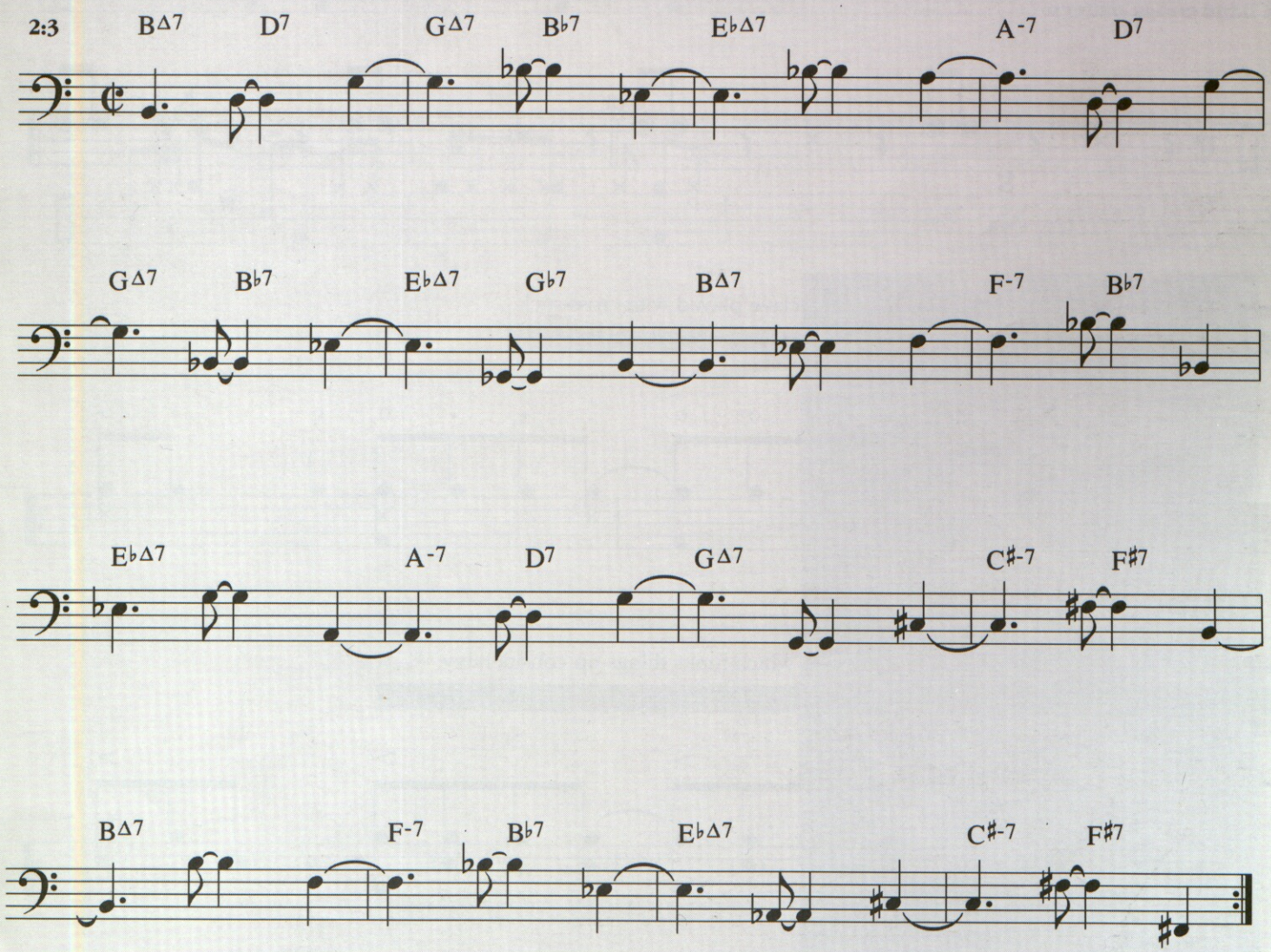


Notice how the note "F" is used as a common tone to make the line move smoothly. These ideas can be very useful for constructing tumbao-like lines through a sequence of chords:

Example 8 Bass tumbao played over Bb blues



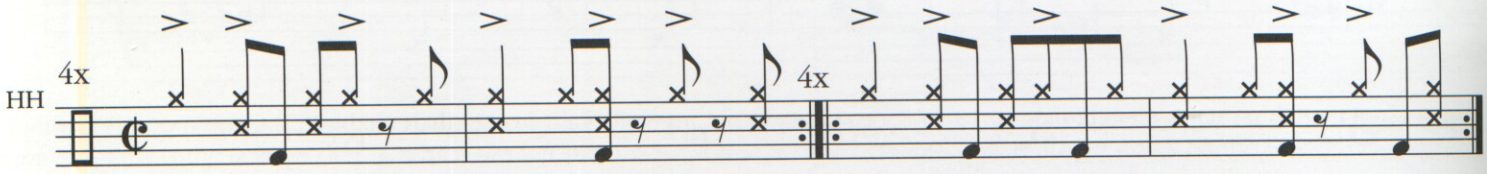
Example 9 Here's a tumbao that will work over the changes to "Giant Steps:"



Here are some combinations of percussion section grooves played on drumset, beginning with the cascara pattern (right hand) being played against the rumba clave (left hand) along with bass drum patterns 1 and 2. Practice with the hi-hat playing half-notes and quarter-notes.

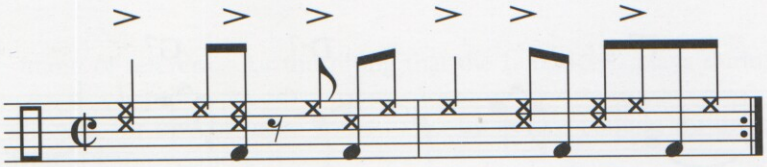
Example 1. Cascara pattern with the rumba clave—two different bass drum patterns

2:3 Rumba clave



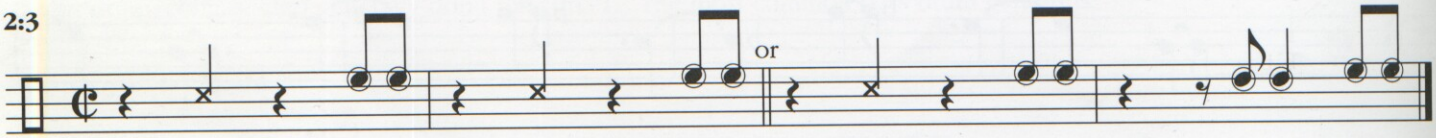
The cascara pattern should be practiced on both sides of the clave using both rumba and son clave. Here for example is the son clave against the 3:2 cascara pattern:

3:2 Son clave



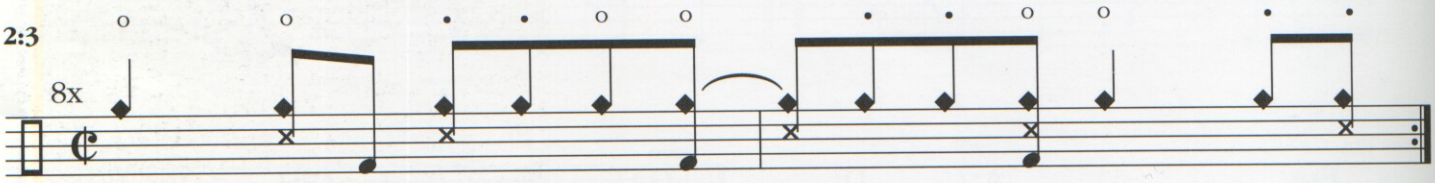
The left hand can also pick up the conga pattern, though this sounds a bit dated to me:

Left hand conga pattern



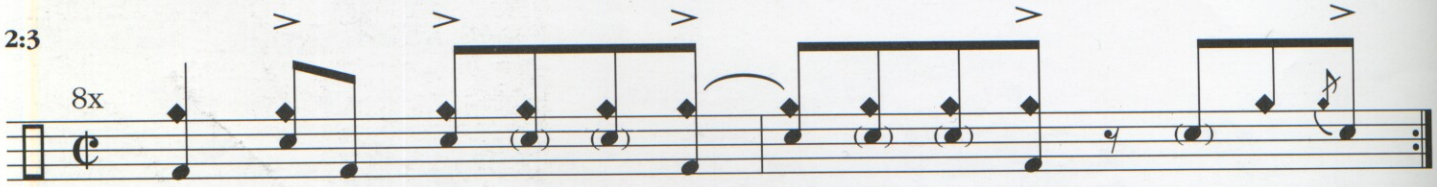
Here is the cowbell ride pattern against the rumba clave played with cross-stick:

Example 2 Bell ride pattern with the left hand cross-stick—rumba clave



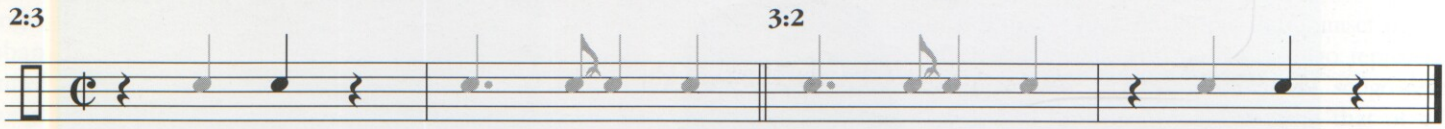
The snare can also be used in a clave-like manner, which funks things up considerably:

Example 3 Bell ride pattern, funkier version with the left hand on the snare drum

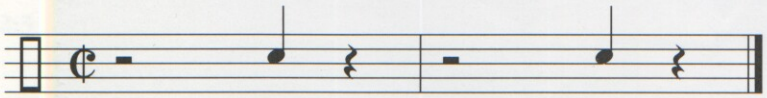


Practice all of the above rhythms with the hi-hat playing quarters and half-notes.

Just as the bass drum is rarely going to groove well playing downbeats, backbeats on "2" and "4" often go against the grain of this music. I have found that a single backbeat on the 2-side of the clave can work pretty well:

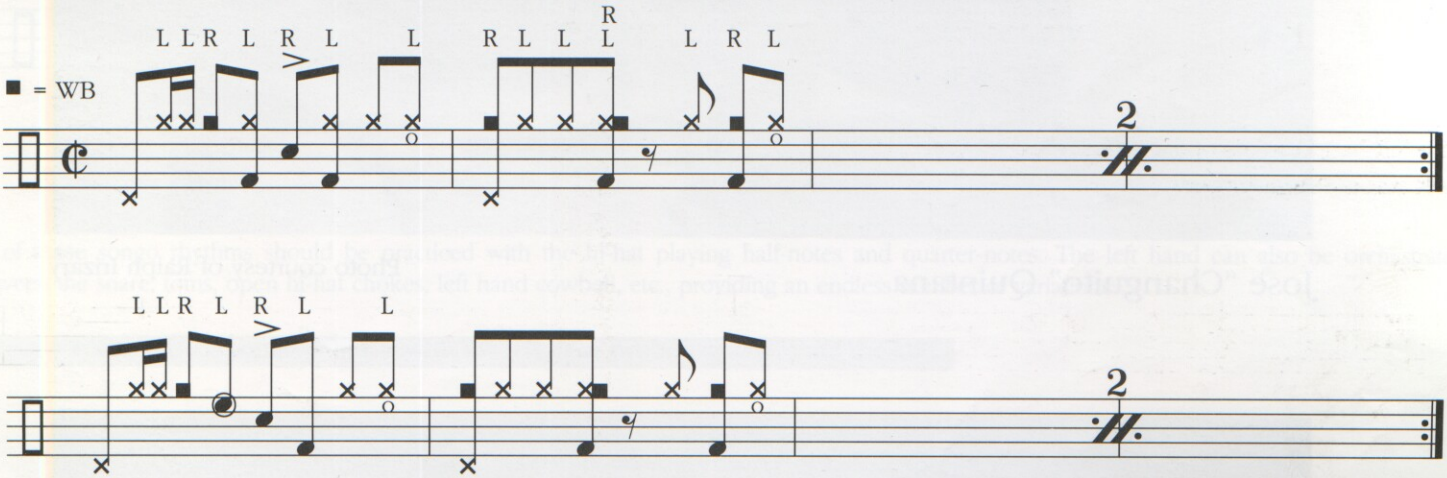


Keep in mind that when we are talking about backbeats, since we are generally in cut-time, the backbeat is really:



Here is a groove for the drums, mostly playing clave, which fits into a basic Latin percussion section without getting in the way:

Example 4 Woodblock son clave with the backbeat, second time with tom variation



Jose "Changuito" Quintana

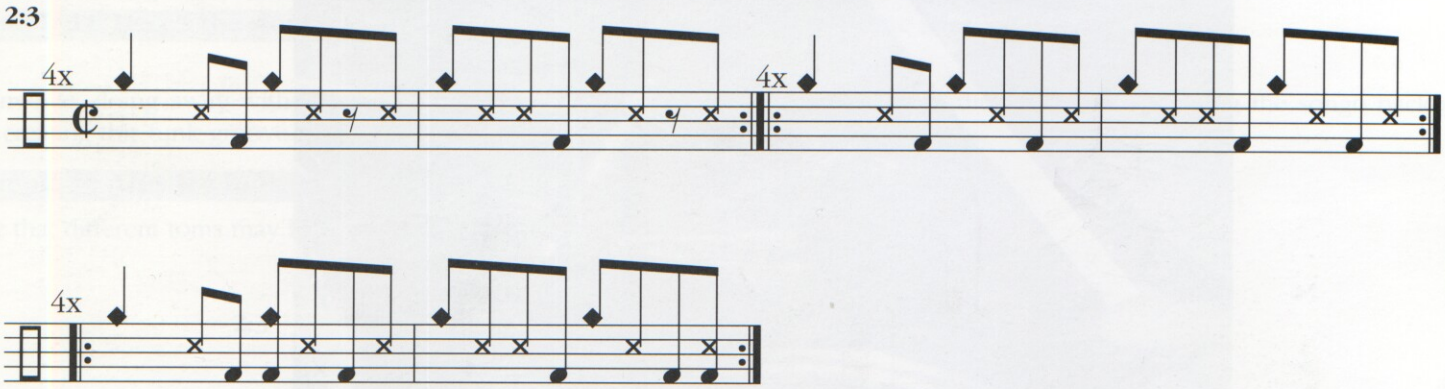
Photo courtesy of Ralph Irizary

Sal Cuevas

CHAPTER TWO: SONGO

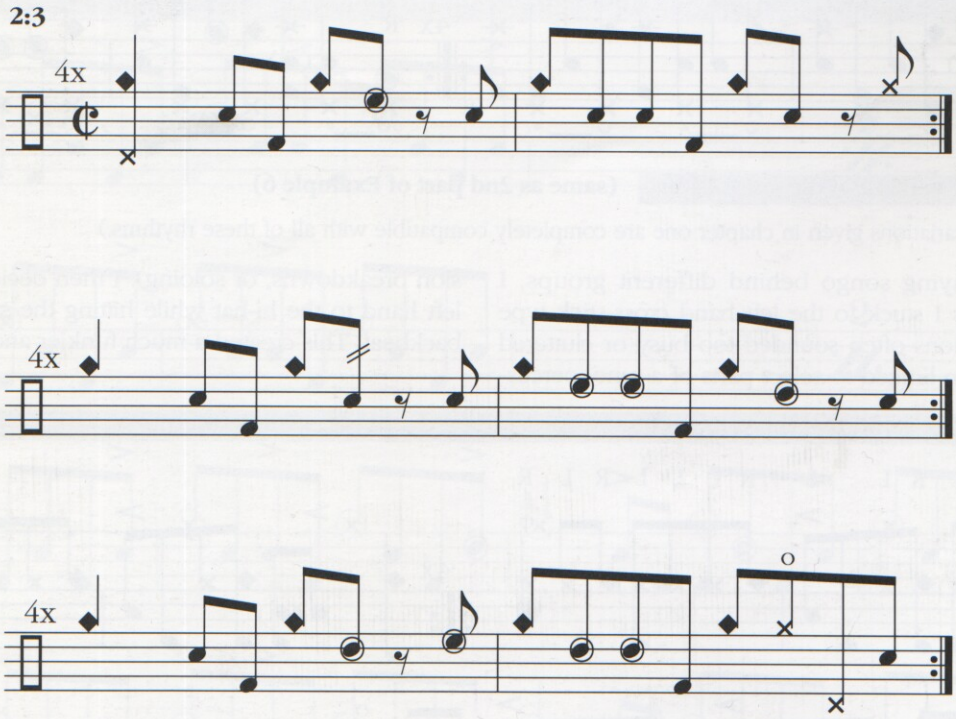
Songo is a rhythmic form developed in the 1970's by the great Cuban percussionist Jose "Changuito" Quintana and bassist Juan Formell of the group Los Van Van. Songo represented a major breakthrough in Latin music by introducing the drumset into the standard percussion triumvirate of congas, timbales and bongos. While some timbale players had been known to add a bass drum or even a snare into their set-ups, the songo rhythm finally put the drumset on equal footing with the other instruments. For the bass, songo represents a much more free and open style of playing. Ultimately, songo reflects the influence of rock and funk from the U.S., and that of other Caribbean-based styles, on Cuban musicians. Example 1 shows the basic songo rhythm on the drumset:

Example 1 Basic songo rhythm with the left hand cross-stick—3 different bass drum variations



All of these songo rhythms should be practiced with the hi-hat playing half-notes and quarter-notes. The left hand can also be orchestrated between the snare, toms, open hi-hat chokes, left hand cowbell, etc., providing an endless number of variations:

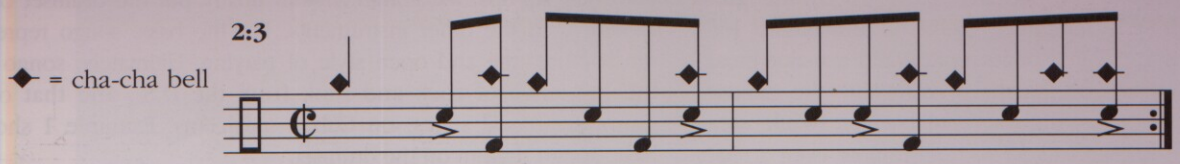
Example 2 Three basic songo patterns with the left hand orchestrated around the kit



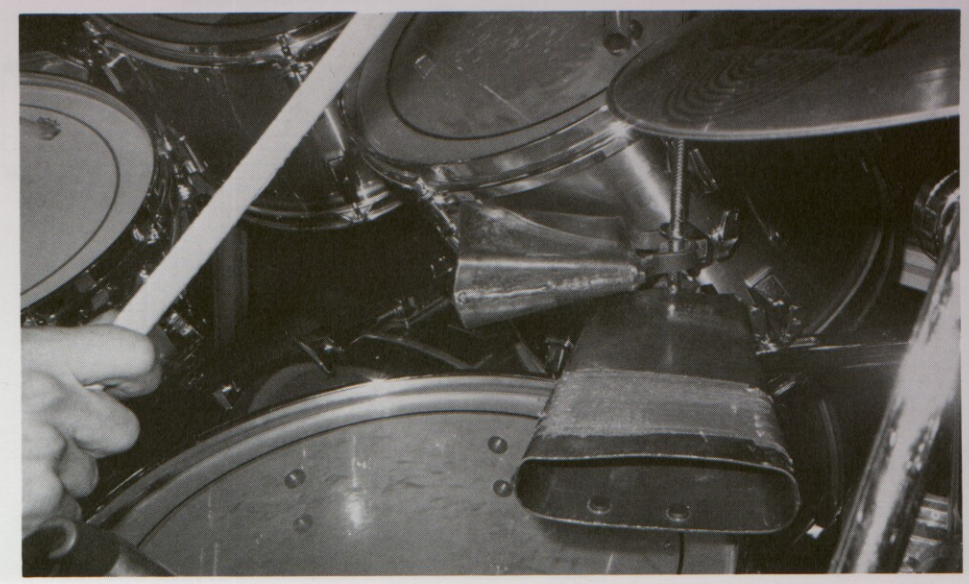
Example 3 Here is a slower version of these variations **(same as Example 2)**

Similarly, the right hand need not stay locked into the quarter-notes on a single bell, but can add some notes or move around to a higher bell:

Example 4 Here's a right hand variation, played on 2 different cowbells

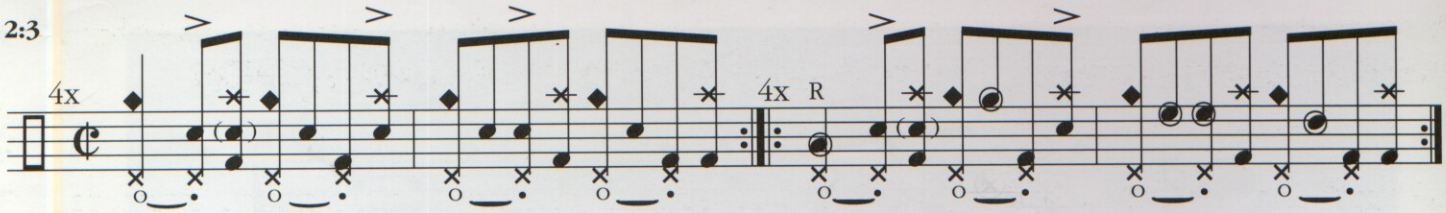


Example 5 Now a slower version of the two cowbells **(same as Example 4)**



Another right hand pattern, which I heard Joel Rosenblatt use with Michel Camilio, is played between the right hand hi-hat and the bell. I then added "sweeps" with the left foot on the hi-hat, to create the sound of the songo guiro pattern:

Example 6 Here's a songo groove where the two hi-hats play the guiro pattern—the left foot playing sweeps with the foot

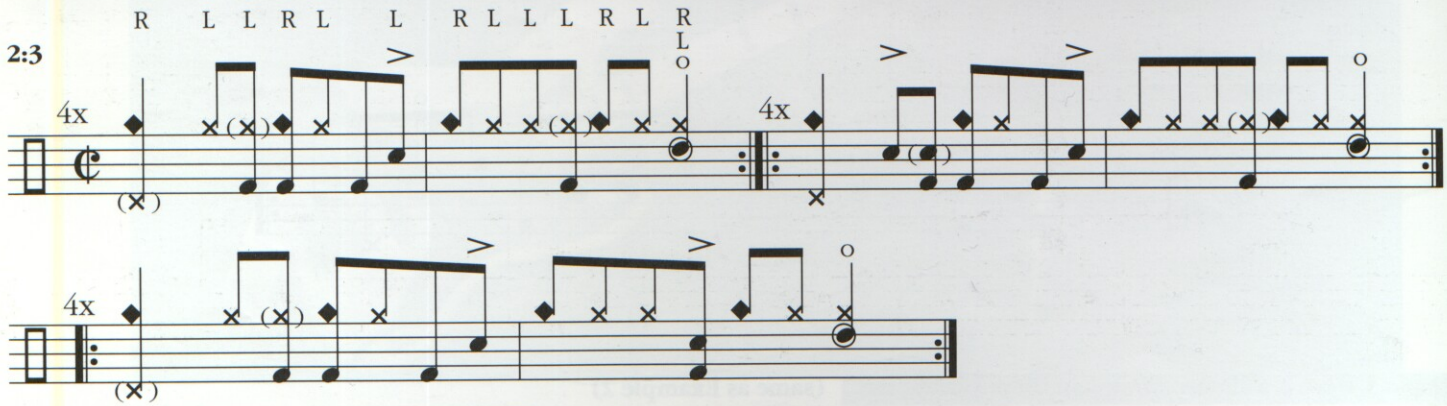


Example 7 Now a slower version of the guiro hi-hat **(same as 2nd part of Example 6)**

(Naturally, the bass drum variations given in chapter one are completely compatible with all of these rhythms.)

When I first started playing songo behind different groups, I always found that unless I stuck to the left hand cross-stick type groove, the above variations often sounded too busy or cluttered (they worked better when limited to select parts of a tune, percussion breakdowns, or soloing). I then decided to move most of the left hand to the hi-hat while hitting the snare on a kind of songo backbeat. This created a much funkier and more versatile groove:

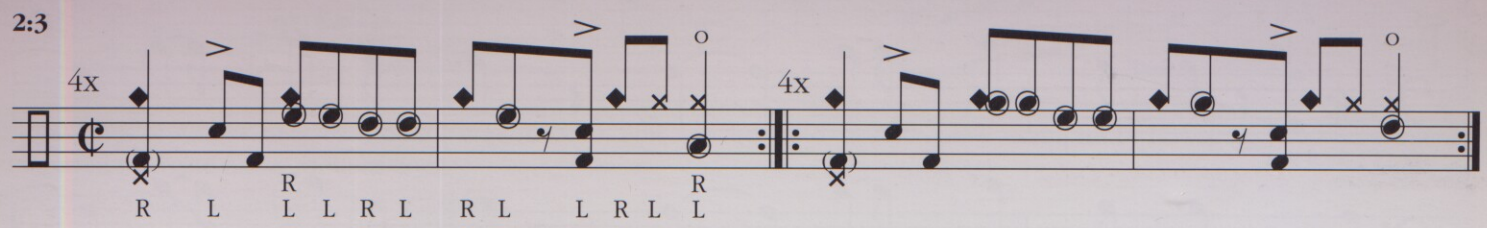
Example 8 Here's a funkier version of the songo with the left hand on the hi-hat, with 3 different snare drum variations



Example 9 Here's a slower version of that songo **(same as Example 8)**

Another instrument which the songo influenced are the congas. The pattern changed dramatically from the basic two drum masacote, to a much more expanded and melodic rhythm. Here is a stripped-down version of this conga pattern played between the toms on the drumset:

Example 10 Next is a songo pattern applying the songo–conga pattern to the drums

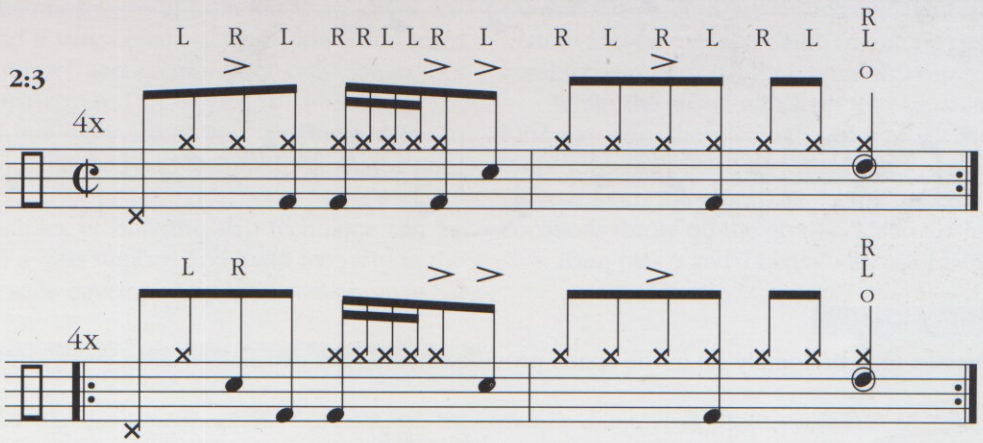


Example 11 Here's the slower version of the songo conga patterns **(same as Example 10)**

Meanwhile, doing away with the cowbell altogether, it is possible to simply ride on the hi-hat, incorporating the songo backbeat and creating this funk groove. This example is shown with two snare drum variations.

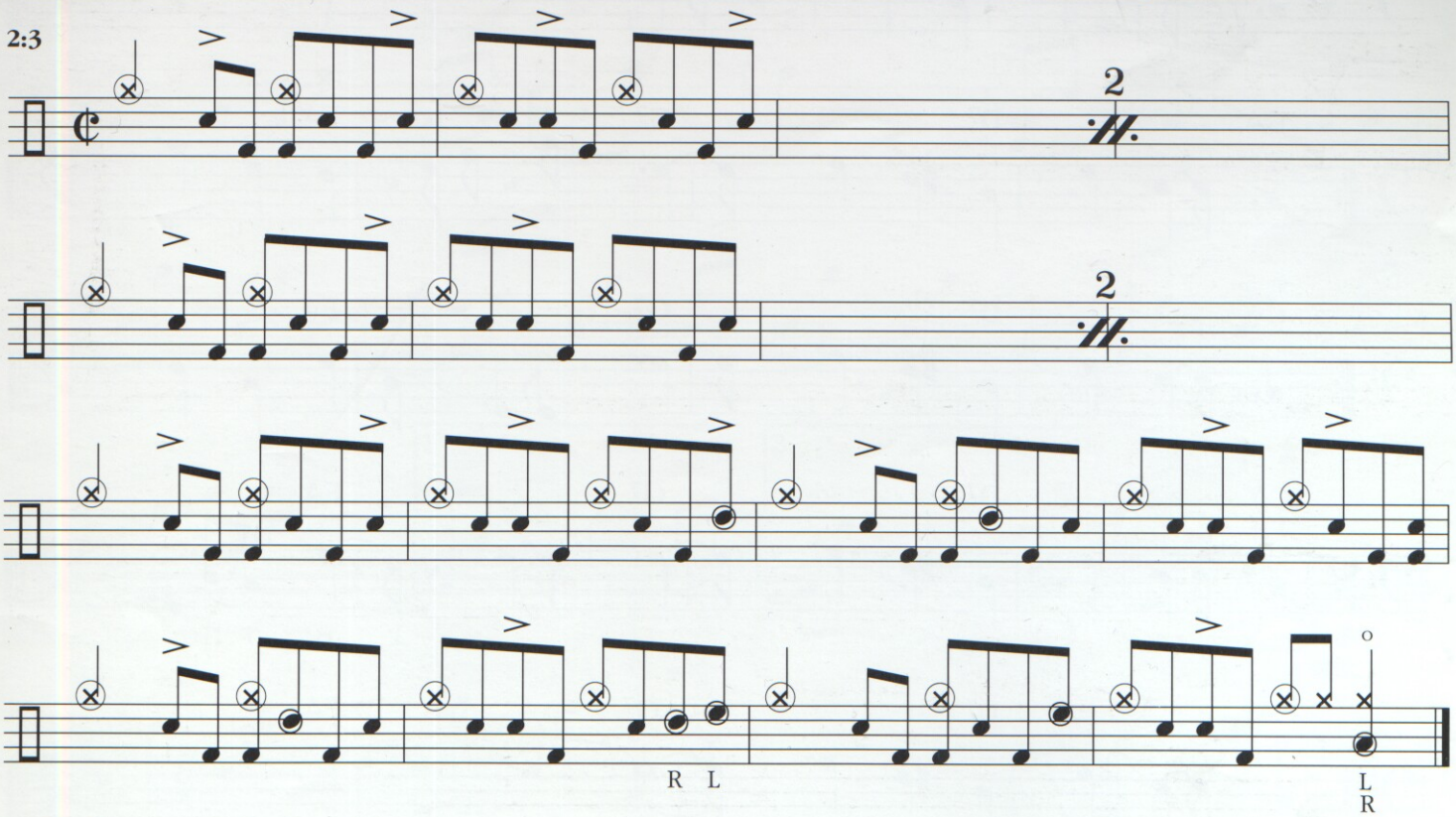
Example 12 This is a funk groove which incorporates the songo backbeat

Note that different toms may be substituted on the fourth beat of the 2nd bar.



Finally, one can ride on the cymbal, playing the songo pattern mostly on the snare drum with certain accents, creating a ride-out effect.

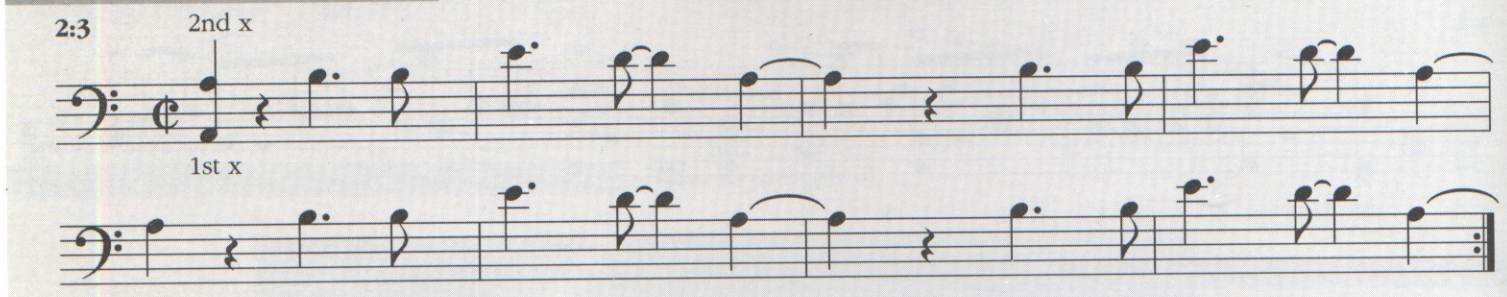
Example 13 Here's a ride-out songo pattern played up on the cymbal with various bass drum patterns



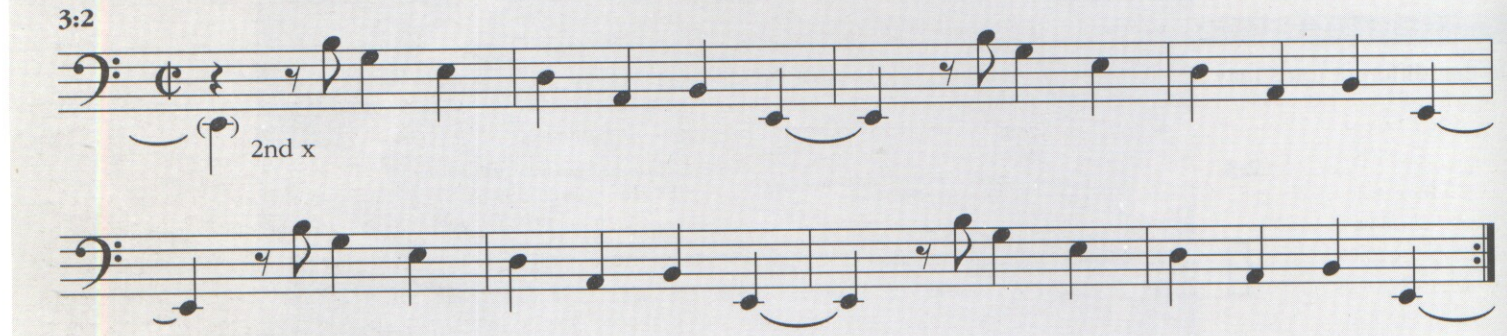
While all of these examples have been given in 2:3 clave, they can also be played in 3:2 clave, as always, by begining with the second measure.

In songo, while the tumbao for the bass remains intact or implied, other inflections can be added. Here are a few examples of some possibilities for songo bass:

Chapter 2 Songo bass examples
Example 1 Orchestra La 440



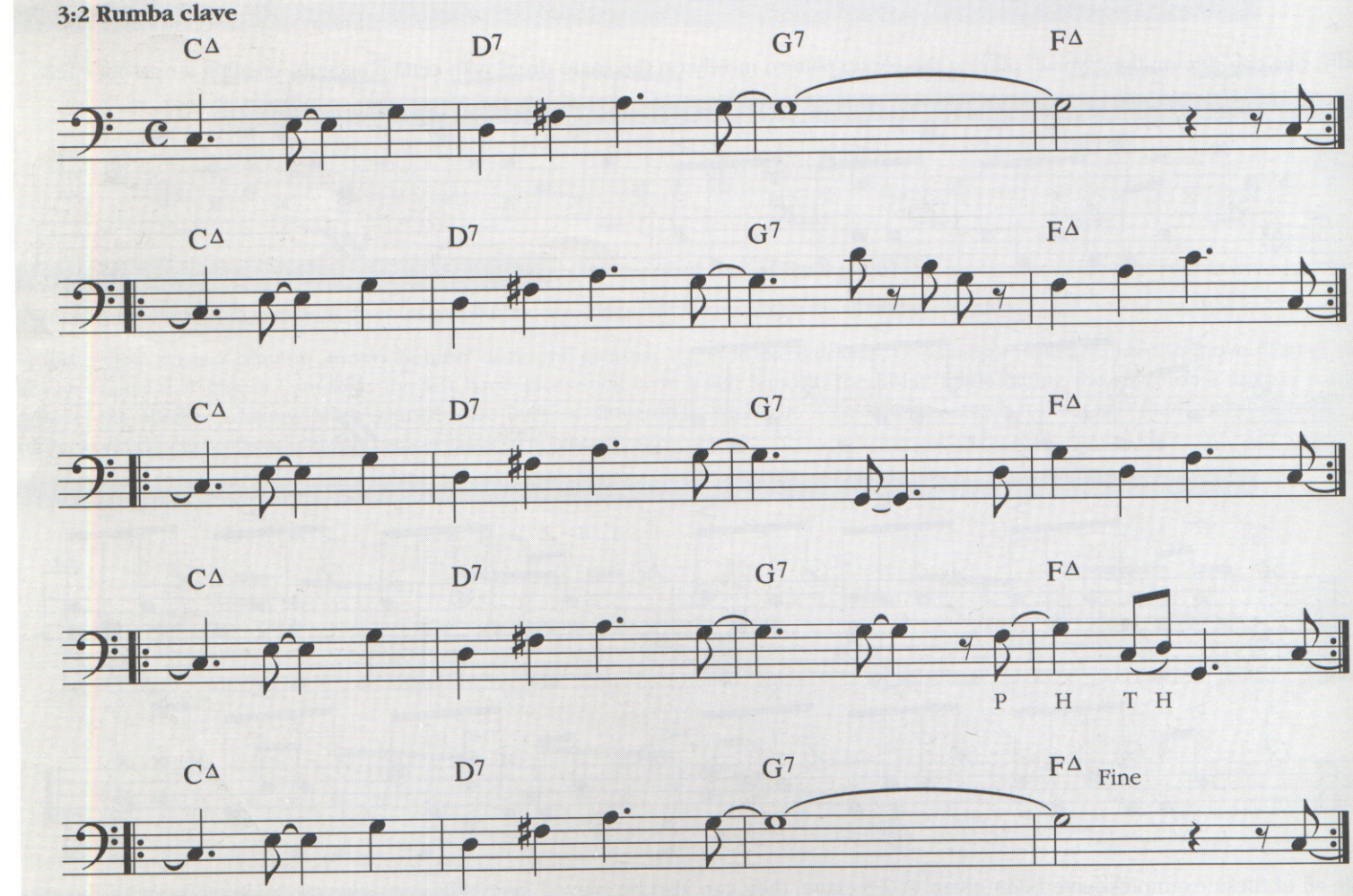
Example 2 Ritmo Oriental



Example 3 "Los Van Van" with fills

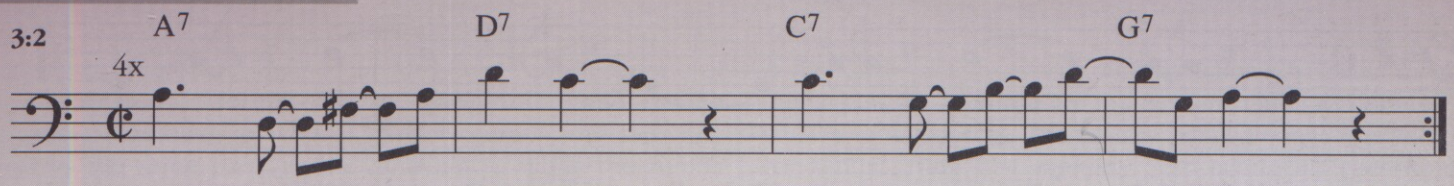
This pattern invites the bassist to occasionally fill in the space provided by the last two bars.

3:2 Rumba clave



This next tumbao has a calypso influence.

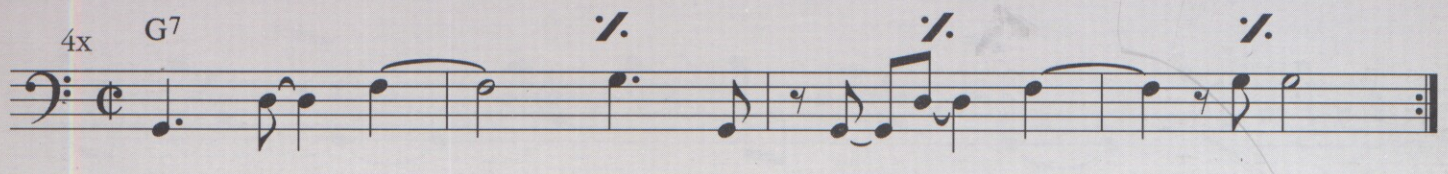
Example 4 3:2 Rumba clave



The bass lines of Andy Gonzalez (Eddie Palmieri, Libre, Fort Apache Band) are definitive examples of how pure folkloric elements can be used to create funky modern lines.

Example 5 Andy Gonzalez style bass line

3:2 son clave

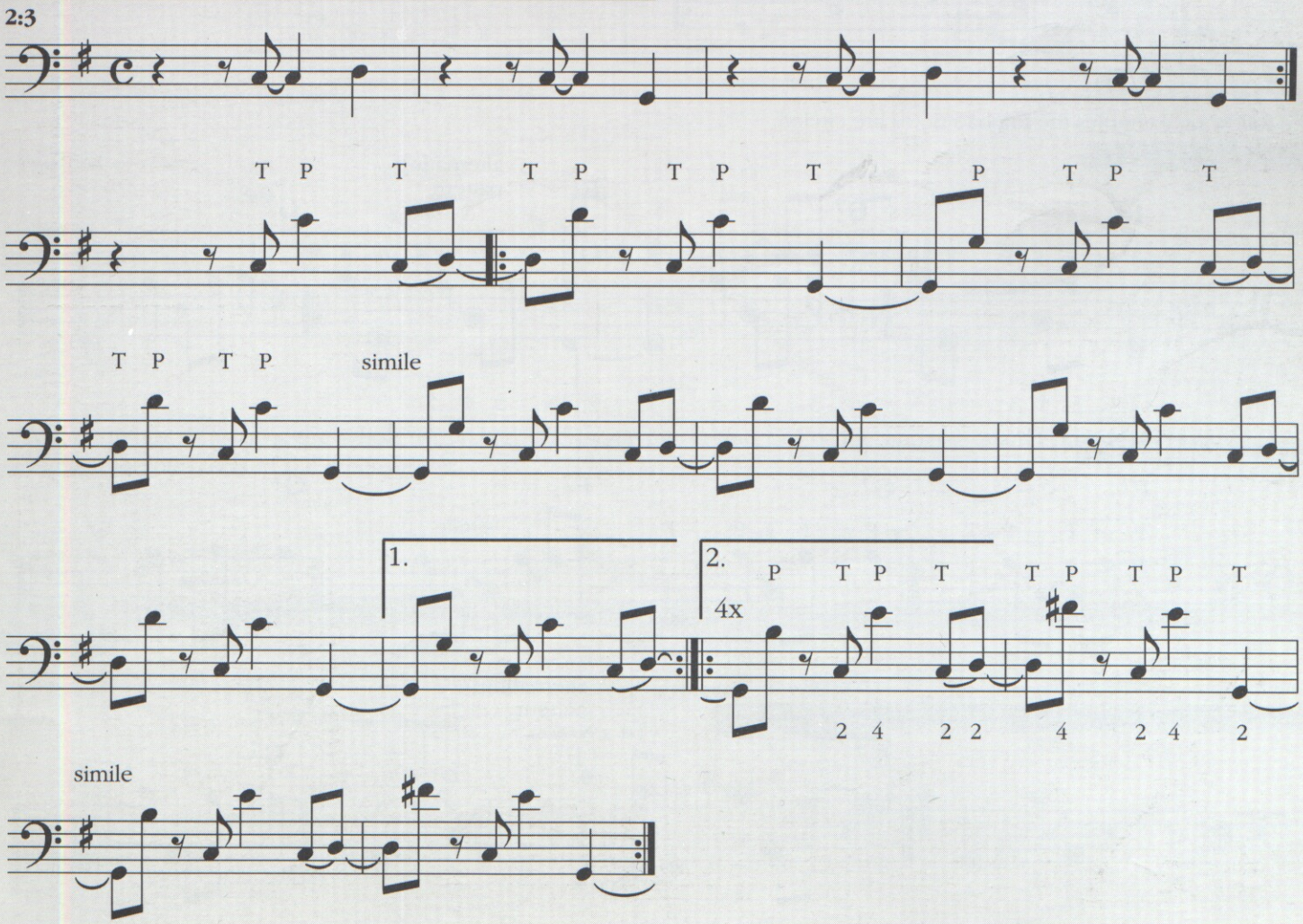


Since all rhythmic and melodic figures in Latin music are drum oriented, as a bassist I found it very beneficial to sit down and learn some patterns on the drumset and congas—not only songo, but most of the other rhythms covered in this book as well, so I at least had a basic idea of how they are played. This helped me to hear how the patterns were pitched and to build permutated lines accordingly.

Here are some examples of how the slap technique can be used to further embellish a bass tumbao and build intensity in the rhythm section. This is a style developed by Latin session great Sal Cuevas. These lines are essentially "double lines:" tumbao on the bottom and fragmented piano (montuno) or conga patterns (or the bassist's own personal funk phrasing) on the top.

While the initial attack should be sharp and percussive, the tumbao notes should ring over into each other in a legato fashion—keep the left hand relaxed and spread over the notes to be played. Keep the emphasis on the tumbao, and don't let the syncopations throw off the groove. Make the lines smooth but aggressive. Examples 6 and 7 begin with eight bars of basic tumbao:

Example 6 Slap tumbao, "Jamming with Arturo in Havana"



Example 7 Slap tumbao, a la Sal Cuevas

2:3

P T P T P P T P T simile

1. 2. 4x

4 2 4 2 4

In the following examples the tumbao notes are circled.

Example 8 Slap songo

2:3

F7 G7 F7 G7

alternating pattern

1st x

T P T P T P 7x P T P P T P T P T P

1 3 4 3 1 3 3 4 3 1 2nd x 3 4 3

Example 9 Slap songo

3:2

F7 G7 F7 G7

P T P T 7x P P T P T simile

Example 10 Slap songo (3:2) A little different tumbao

3:2

F7 G7 F7 G7

alternating pattern

1st x

7x

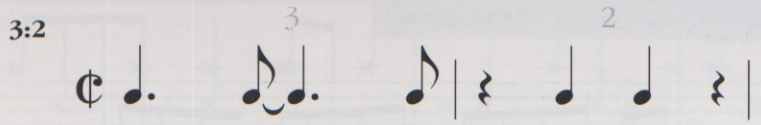
2 3 2 4 2 4 2 4 2nd x

CHAPTER THREE: GUAGUANCO

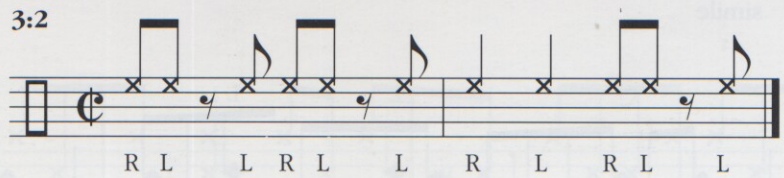
Guaguanco is properly defined in Afro-Cuban music as one of the three "rumba" forms—*yambu, guaguanco,* and *rumba columbia.* Yambu is played at slower tempos and basically involves the same parts as the guaguanco, while the rumba columbia is played at fast tempos, with a stricter triplet feel.

The traditional rumba group includes three congas, clave, *palito* (stick pattern), vocals and sometimes bass and even *tres* (guitar). At the forefront are the dancers, either performing indivdually or as couples. The highest pitched conga (the *quinto)* is constantly riffing (the *repique),* also taking his cues from the dancer. A typical song begins with the clave and palito, followed by the drums, verse, chorus, quinto solo, chorus and out.

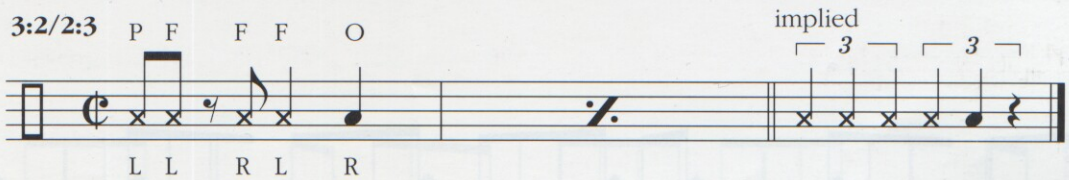
Here are the basic patterns of the percussion ensemble. The clave will be rumba clave:



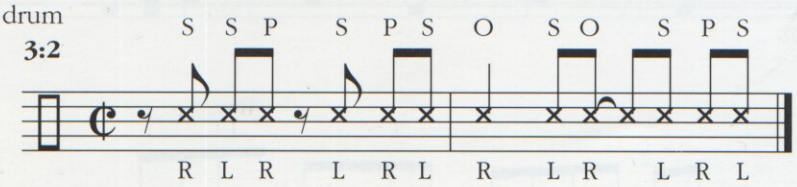
Palito



Salidor or low conga

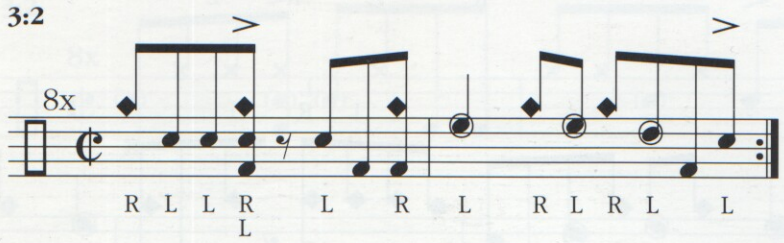


Tres golpes or middle drum



Finally, the quinto solos over the whole ensemble, often weaving in and out of the implied quarter-note triplet and 8th-note (or triplet and 16th-note) feels of the other drums.

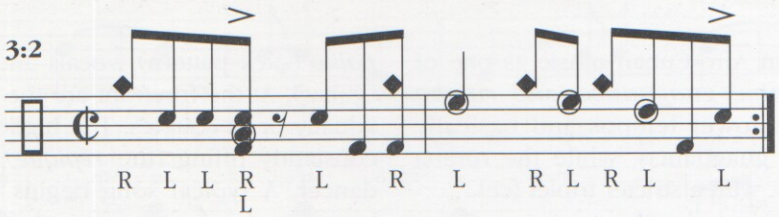
Example 1 Here's a direct application of the guaguanco conga patterns as played on the drumset, with the clave in the right hand



Example 2 This is a slower version of that guaguanco **(same as Example 1)**

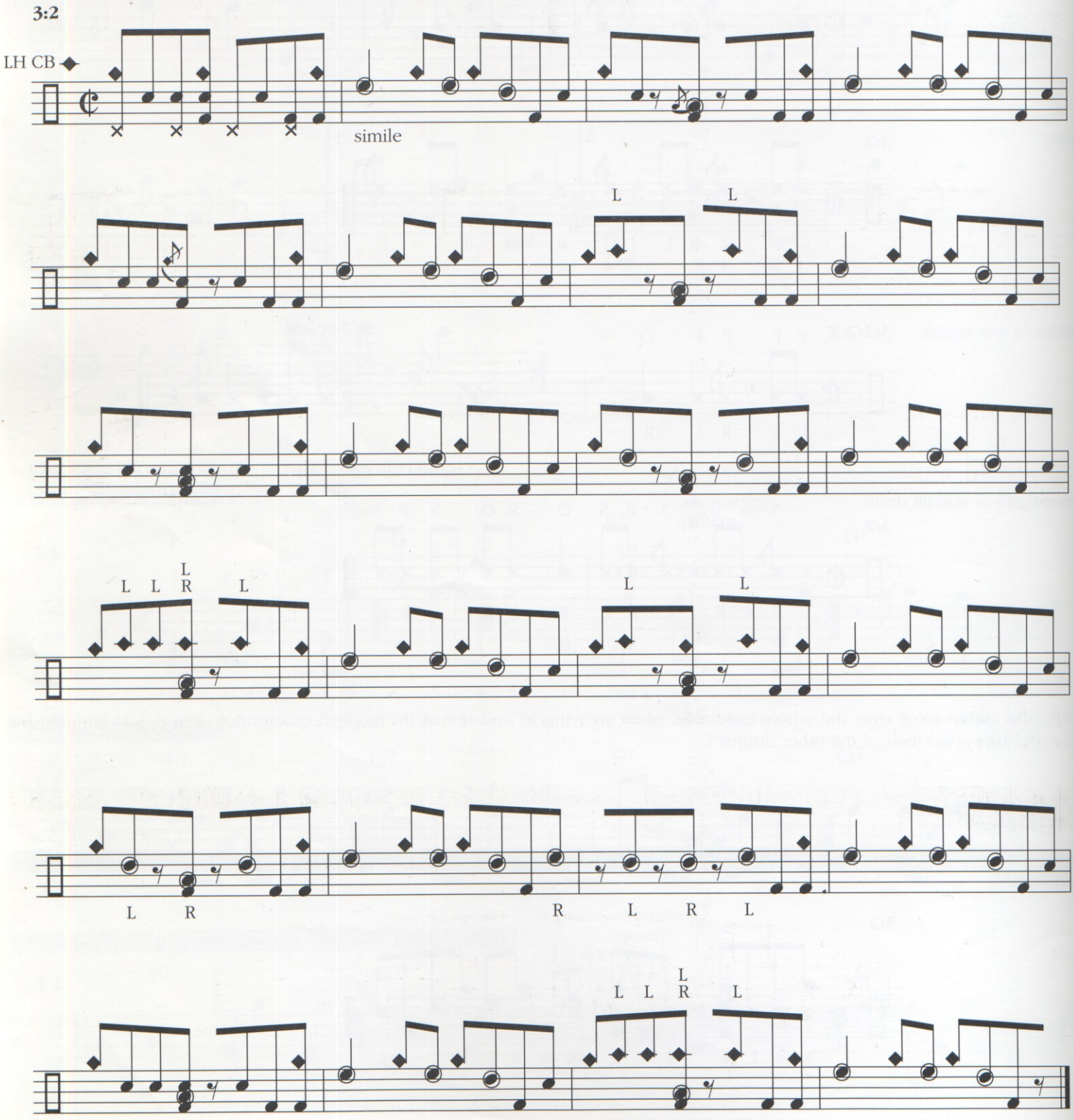
The floor tom can be added to reinforce the 3-side of the clave, which we will see greatly enhanced by the bass player's guaguanco tumbaos:

(not included on the tape)



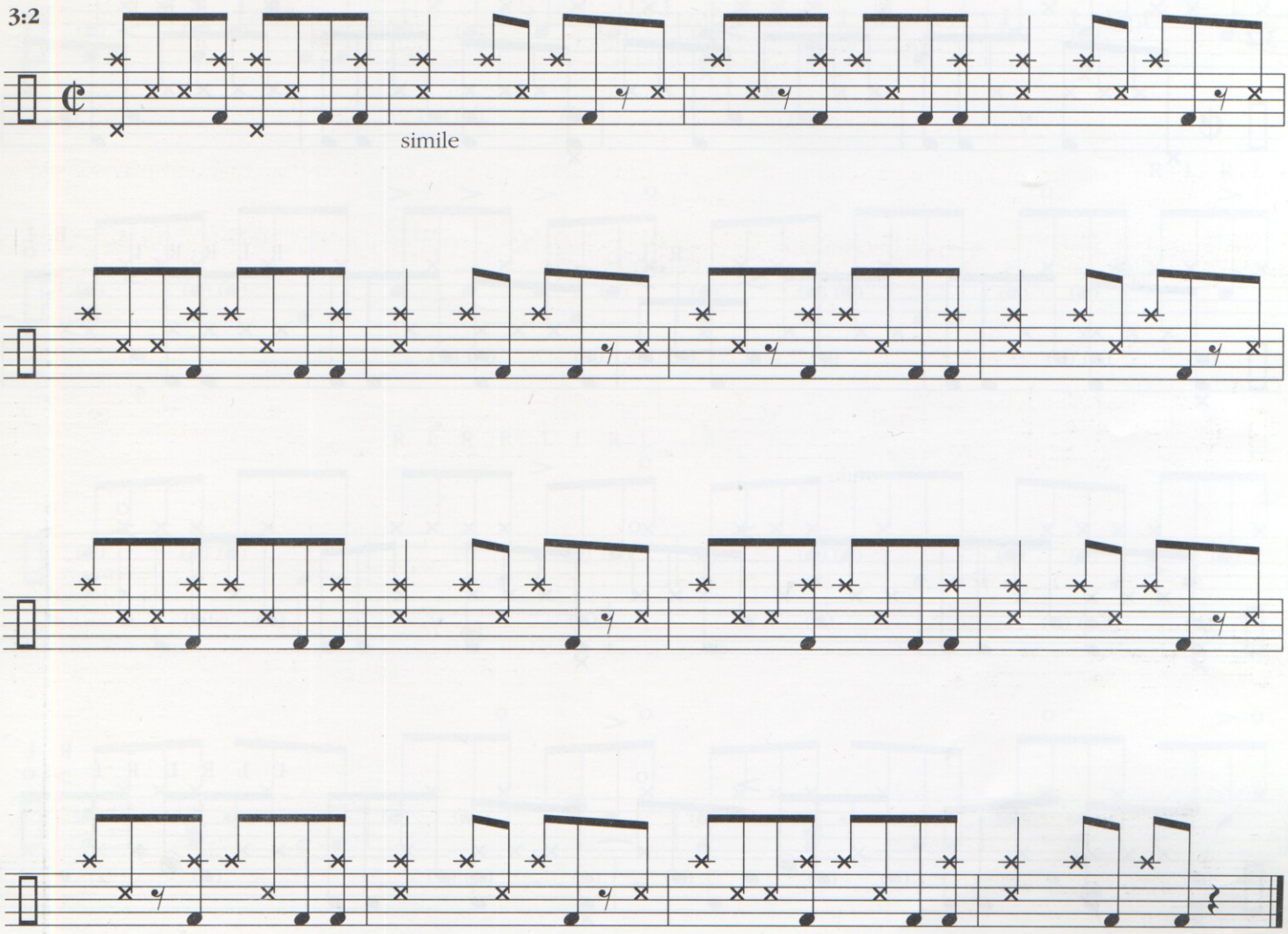
The snare drum is basically playing the slaps of the tres golpes part, but the left hand can also riff around and play some quinto licks, while the basic guaguanco voices are already being covered:

Example 3 Now I would like to play some guaguanco on the drums, orchestrating the left hand around the kit, riffing sporadically. Note the floor tom substitute on the 3-side of the clave.



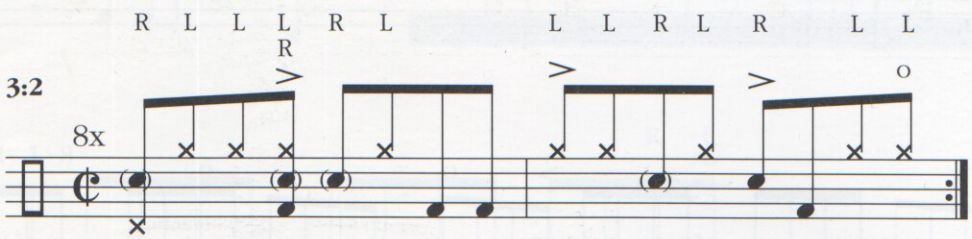
This next example works pretty well behind quieter sections of a tune, or during percussion, piano and bass solos.

Example 4 Here's a guaguanco pattern which incorporates the left hand on the cross-stick—note the bass drum variations



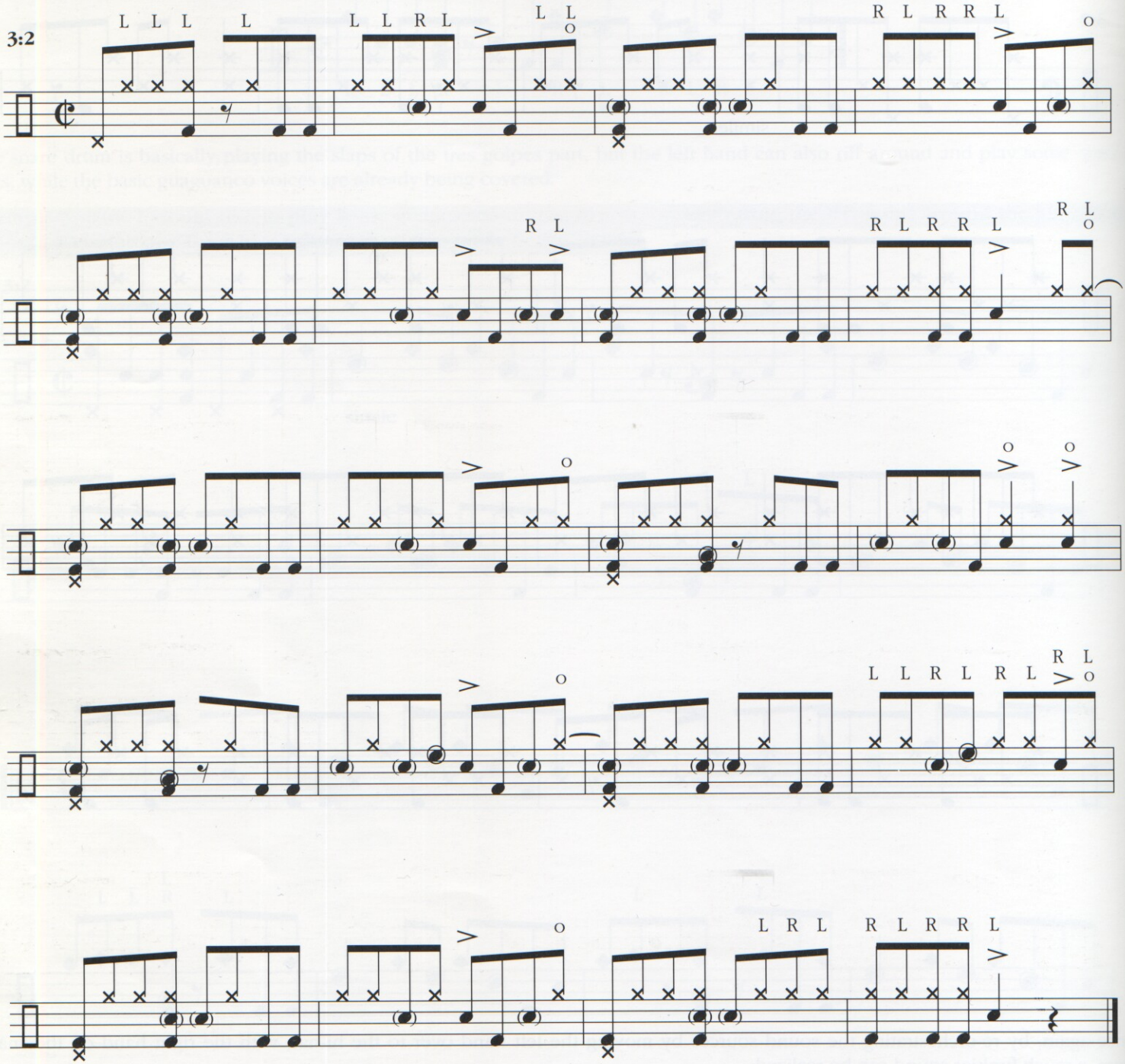
Once again, by re-orchestrating the sound sources by moving the left hand over to the hi-hat, with the right hand on the snare drum, a much funkier sound can be realized:

Example 5 Now a funkier version of the guaguanco which basically transposes what was happening with the left hand over to the hi-hat

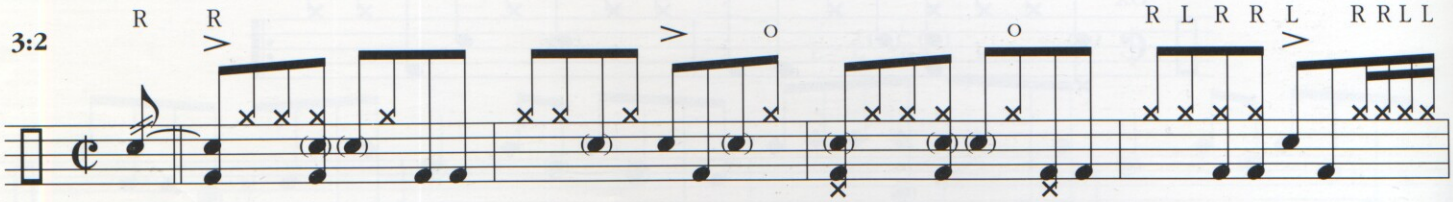


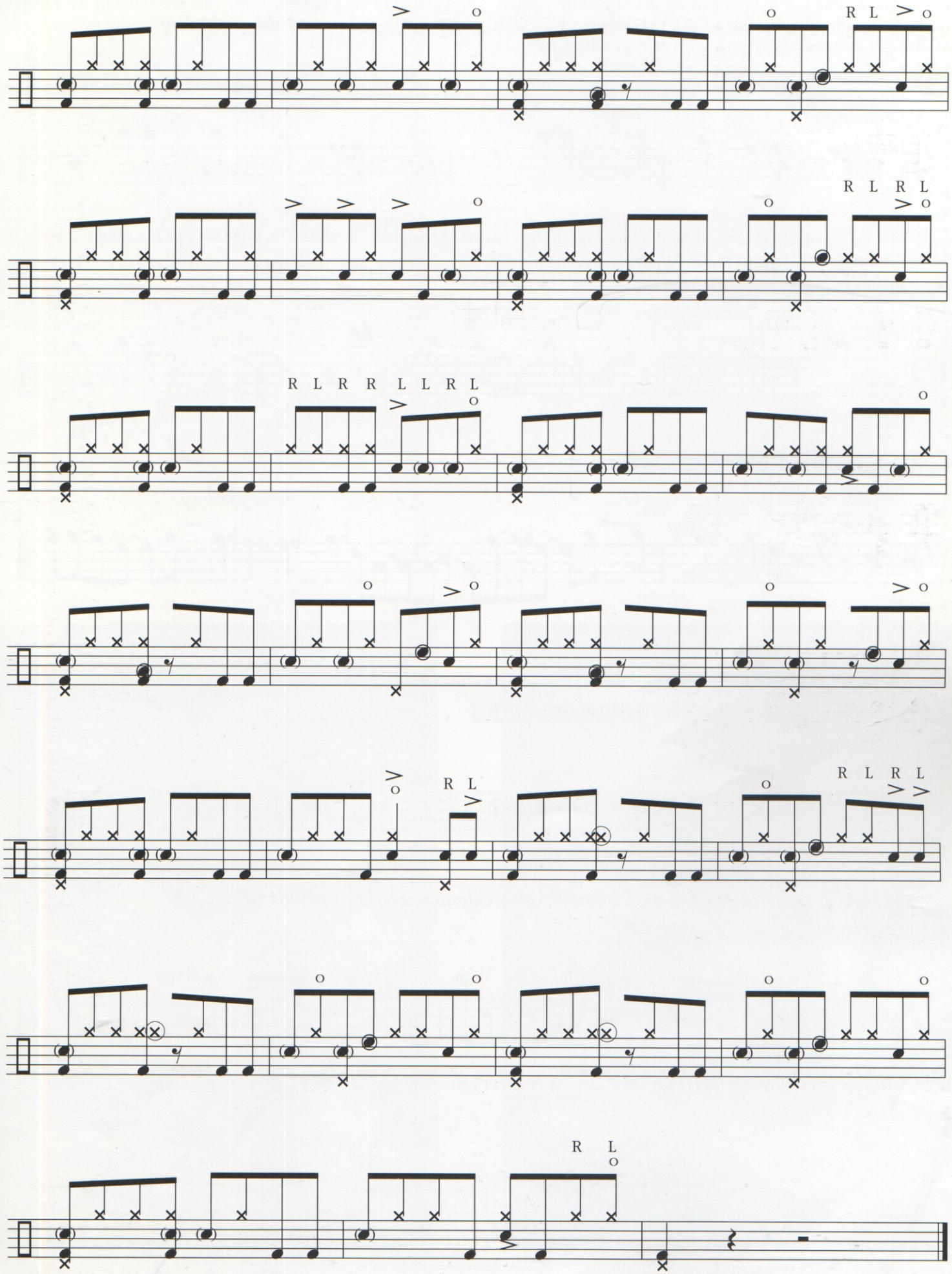
At this point, the rhythm starts to resemble a Bo Diddley/New Orleans second line style, where the pulse is more clave than backbeat.

Example 6 This is the same type of groove, with some variations on the bass drum within the groove



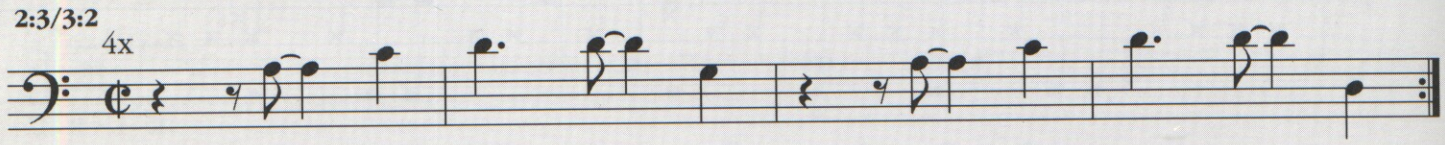
Example 7 Here's a faster version of this kind of funk-guaguanco




R L R L
R L R R L L R L
R L
R L R L

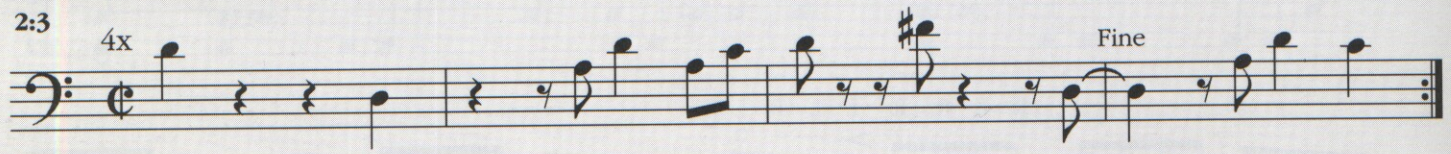
The role of the bass functioning as a drum part is most evident in the guaguanco. This is a style of playing developed by Cachao, who in addition to playing with a full band, also recorded with just congas and vocals, along with the guitarist Arsenio Rodriguez. In the first example, note the melodic similarity to the tres golpes of the guaguanco. This line is commonly used both in unison with, and as a call-and-response to, the tres golpes.

Example 1 Rumba Guaguanco

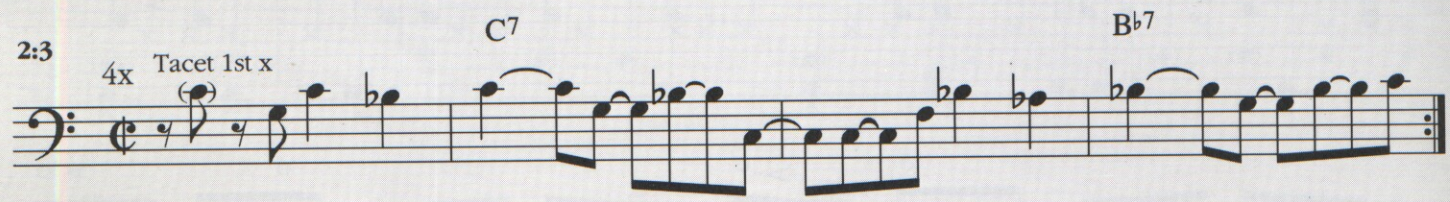


Cachao is a master at riffing around on the bass within the context of the clave, in much the same way as the quinto follows the lead vocalist or the movements of the dancers in traditional rumba:

Example 2 Descarga Cubana (2:3)

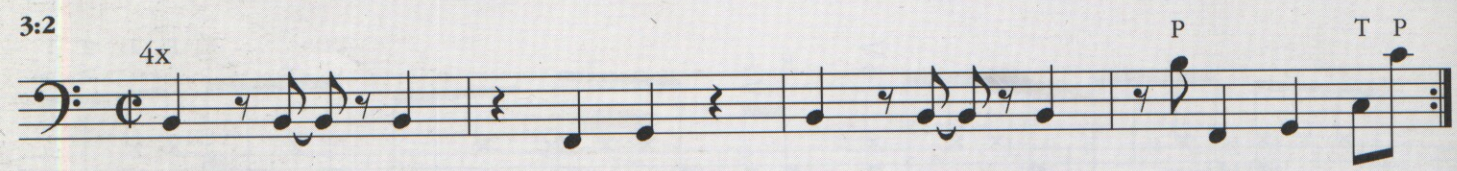


Example 3 Another Cuban Descarga (2:3)



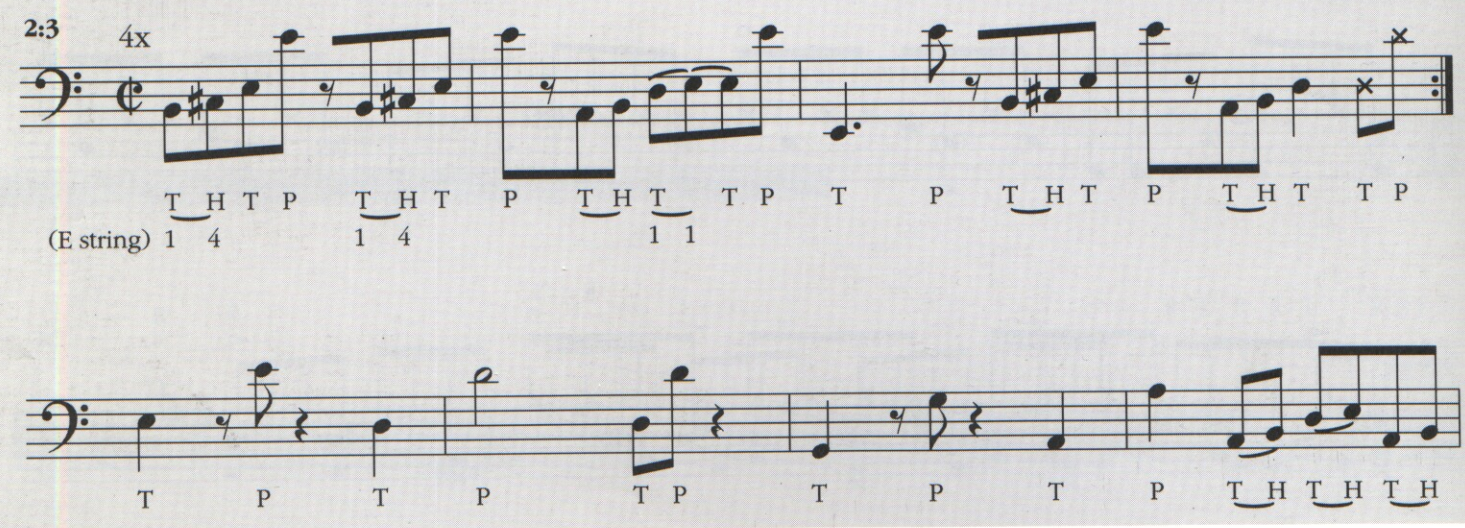
Like the drums, the bass can also get into the "Bo Diddley/New Orleans" groove by outlining the 3:2 clave in the following manner:

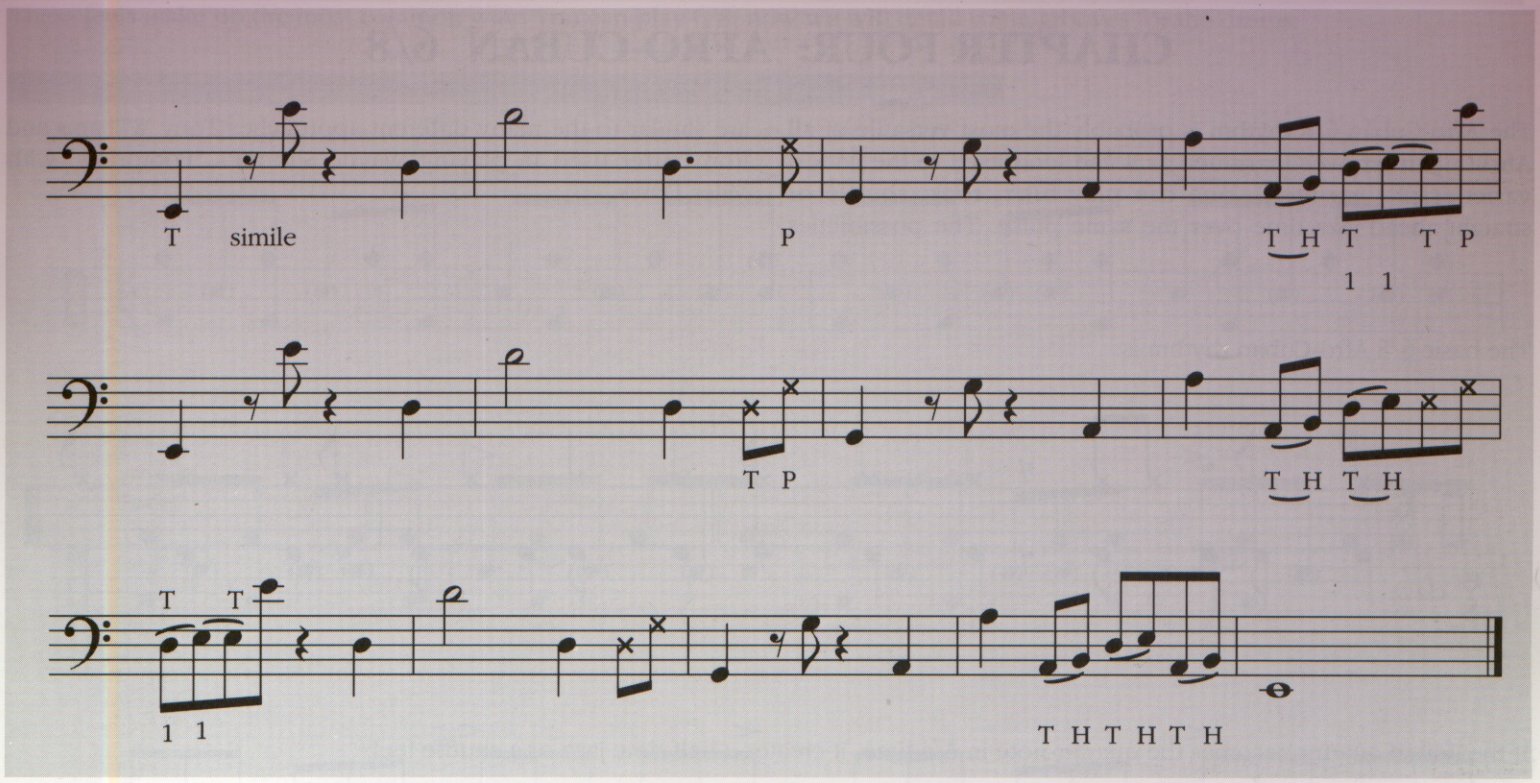
Example 4 New Orleans "second line" feel (3:2 son clave)



Here are some lines that combine elements of guaguanco, New Orleans second line style, and funk.

Example 5 Funk-guaguanco, 2 variations





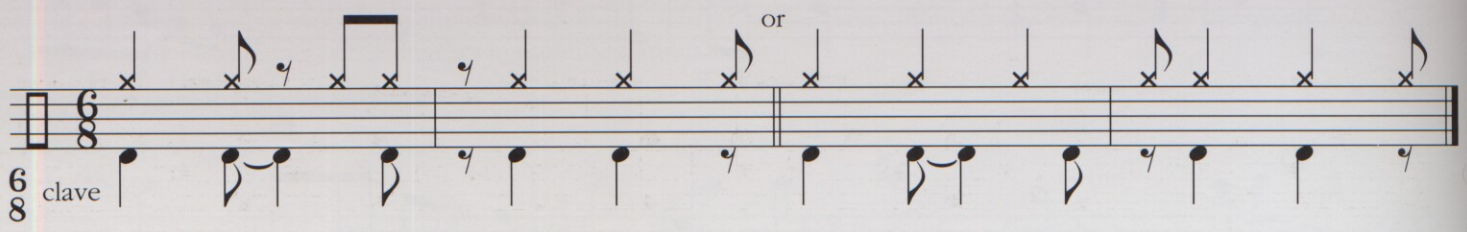
Tito Puente
(Photo courtesy of Boys Harbor Performing Arts Center)

Andy Gonzalez

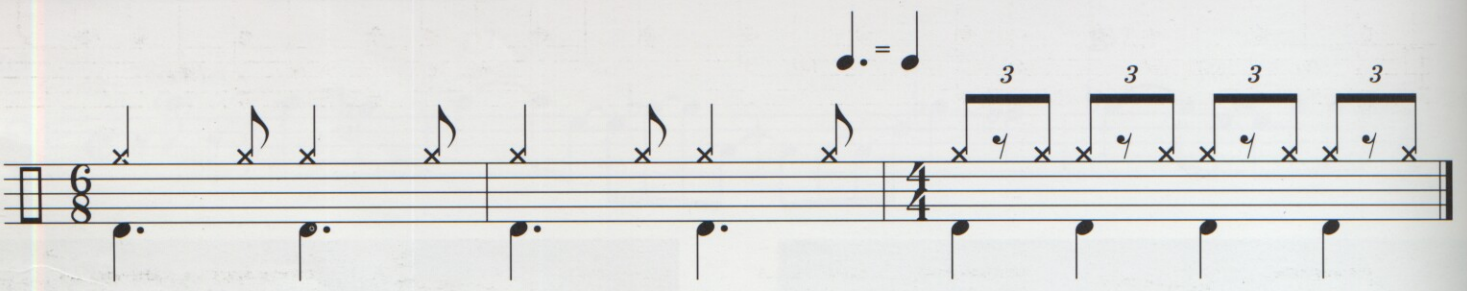
CHAPTER FOUR: AFRO-CUBAN 6/8

The Afro-Cuban 6/8 rhythm is probably the most versatile of all Afro-Cuban grooves inasmuch as it can lend itself to the widest varieties of time feels—one can play funk, rock, shuffle or straight-ahead jazz time over the same pulse. The possibilities are similar to the many different approaches Tony Williams and Ron Carter used in playing Wayne Shorter's "Footprints" with Miles Davis.

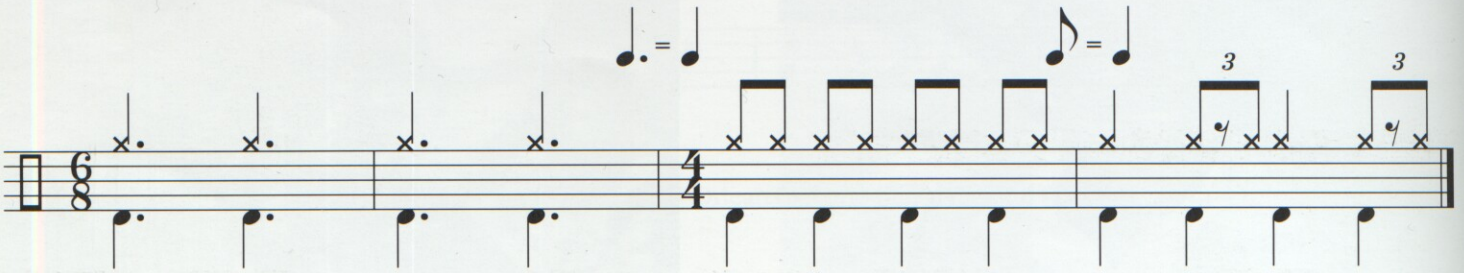
The basic 6/8 Afro-Cuban rhythm is:



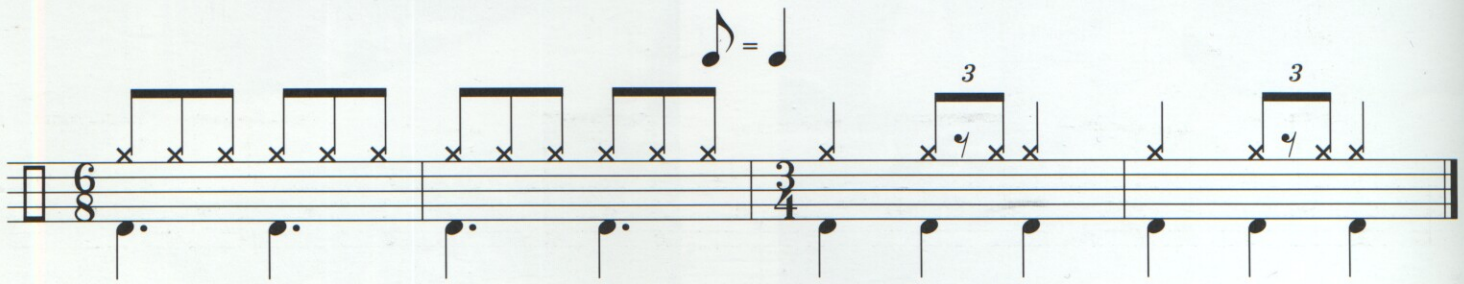
If the dotted quarter becomes the quarter-note in 4/4 time, it creates a half-time jazz or a shuffle feel:



Similarly, with the dotted quarter becoming quarter-notes, you can play 8th-notes over the pulse, creating a double-time swing feel:

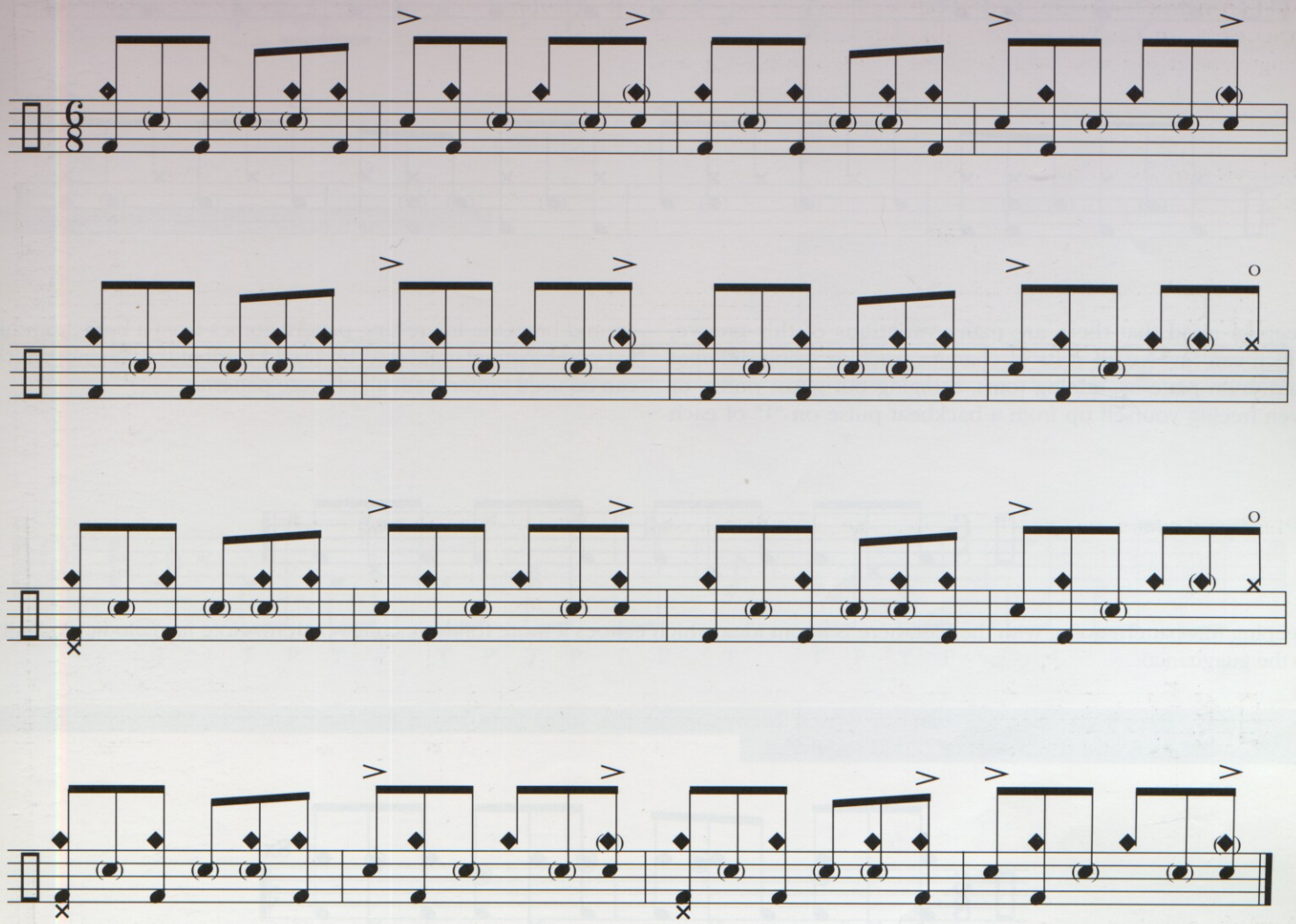


Meanwhile, the 8th-notes of the 6/8 can become 3/4 quarter-notes, creating a jazz-waltz feel:

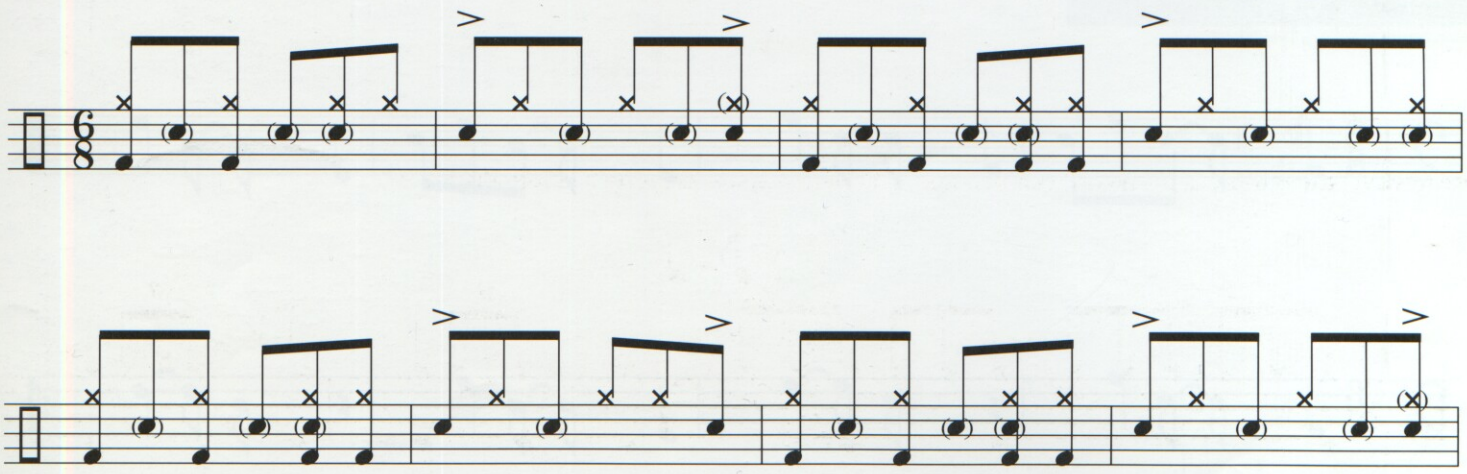


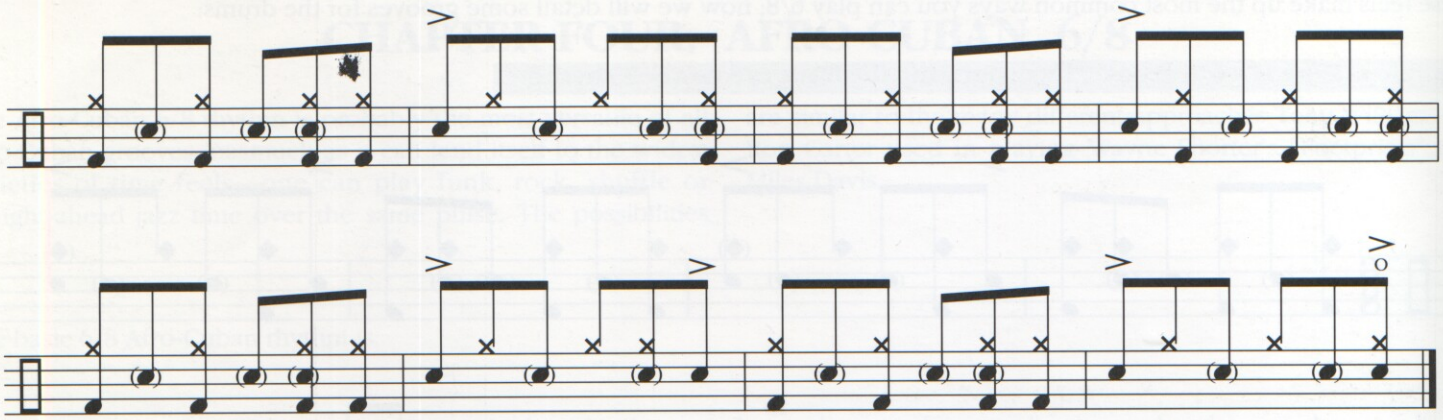
These feels make up the most common ways you can play 6/8; now we will detail some grooves for the drums:

Example 1 Here is a 6/8 groove, incorporating the basic 6/8 cowbell rhythm

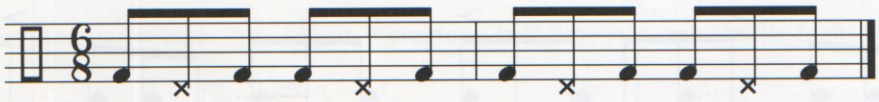


Example 2 Now the same rhythm, played on hi-hat



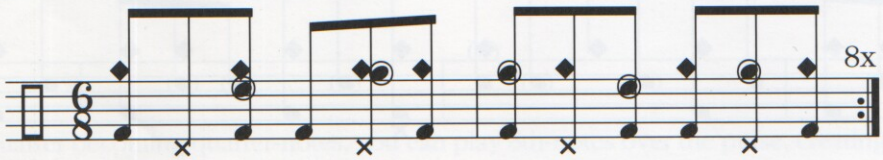


Keep in mind that there are many variations of this groove, which can involve all sorts of changes, such as using different bass drum patterns, adding toms, bringing out ghost notes, or even freeing yourself up from a backbeat pulse on "1" of each second bar. One interesting pattern comes from a bass drum/hi-hat combination suggested by David Garibaldi's playing, which can be used underneath all of these patterns:



Keeping this pattern going with the feet, here is a tom idea which echoes a more folkloric conga pattern. Note its melodic similarity to the guaguanco:

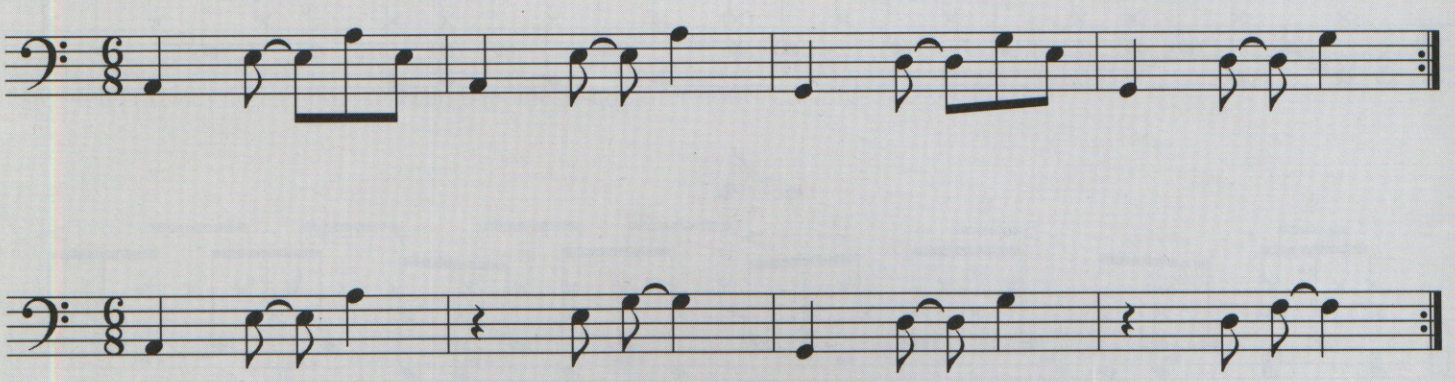
Example 3 Here's another 6/8 pattern which incorporates the toms in a more folkloric context, also using an idea between the kick and the hi-hat of David Garibaldi

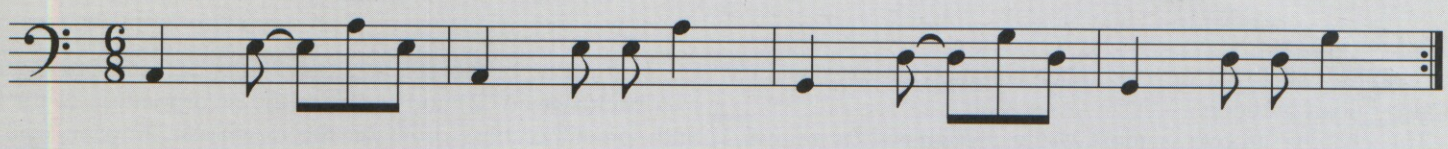


Bass:

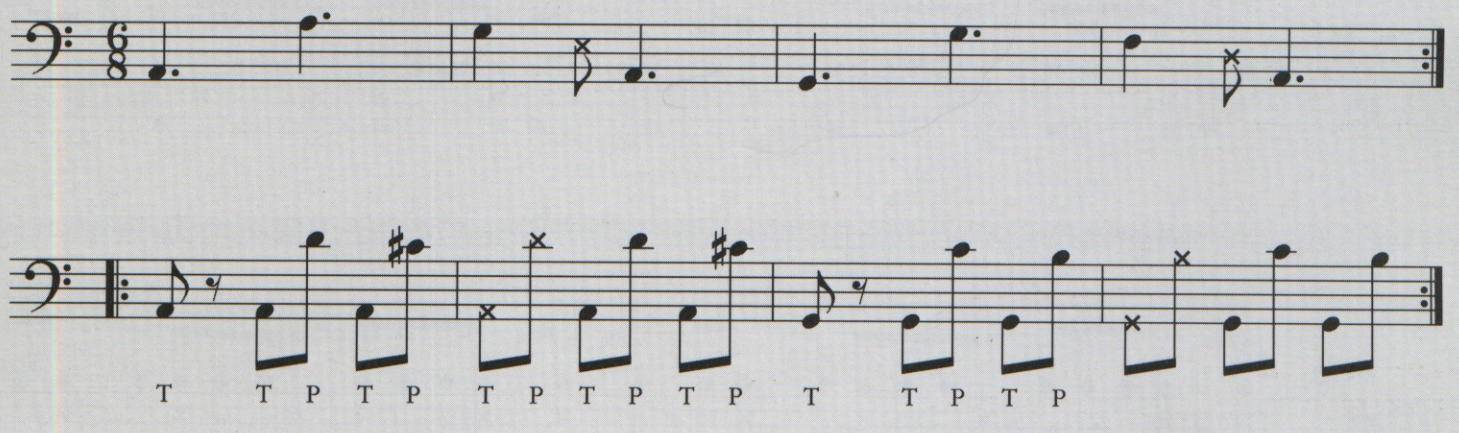
As with all the other Afro-Cuban rhythmic forms shown in this book, the 6/8 bass tumbao takes those elements from the drums that best connect rhythm and harmony. These lines are very polyrhythmic in nature and can be heard and felt in many different ways. When playing them I usually feel the time moving in dotted quarters and make the notes long and even.

Example 1 6/8 with 3 variations





Example 2 6/8 shuffle with a funk variation



CHAPTER FIVE: CHA-CHA AND MOZAMBIQUE

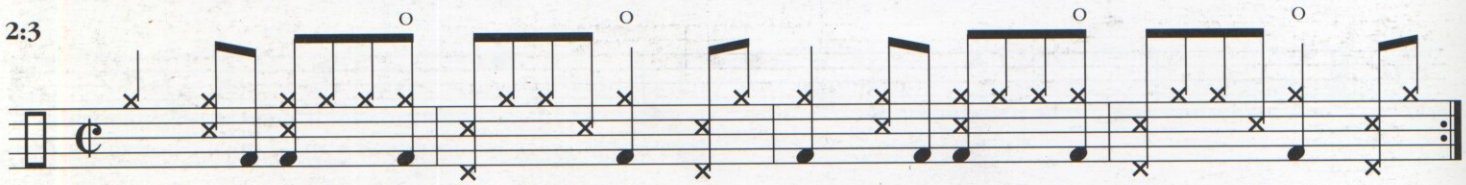
CHA-CHA

This chapter will focus on two other common grooves within the Afro-Cuban tradition.

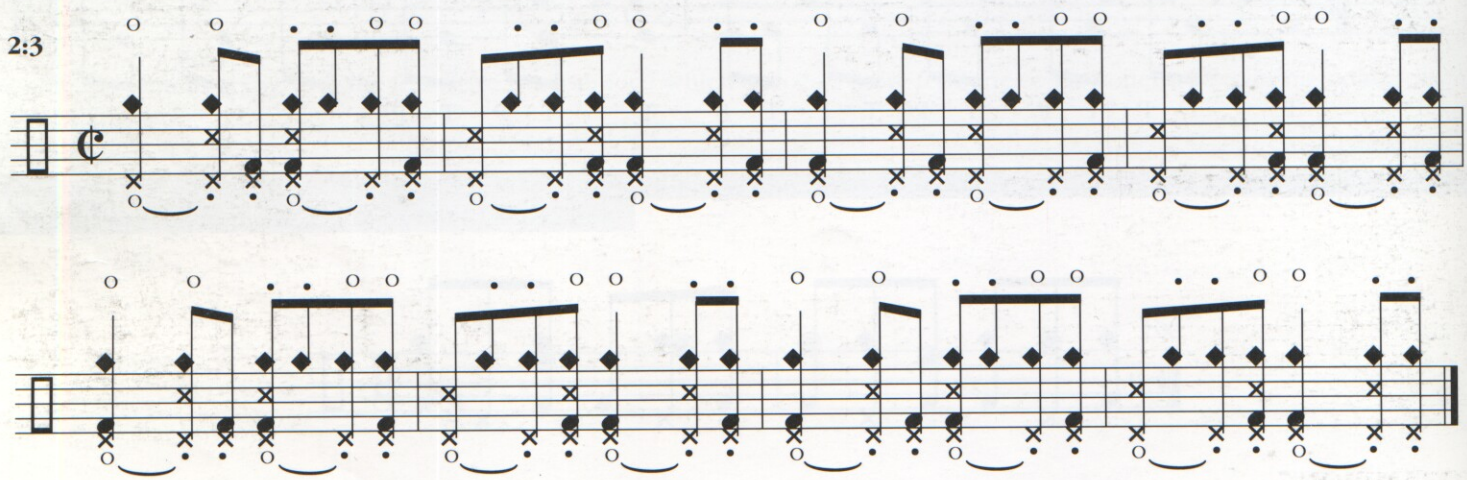
The cha-cha groove is most easily recognized by tempo, which is generally medium–slow to medium (M.M. 88–132). More than any other Latin style, it may be the easiest to rock out on, as it is one of the only basic rhythms that lends itself readily to a backbeat on "2" and "4," with the incorporation of the bass and sometimes bass drum on the downbeat. Anyone who has ever listened to Santana's version of the Tito Puente standard "Oye Como Va" knows what we mean.

Here is a basic cha-cha groove on the drums:

Example 1 This is a cha-cha rhythm played on the hi-hat which incorporates the left hand cross-stick clave

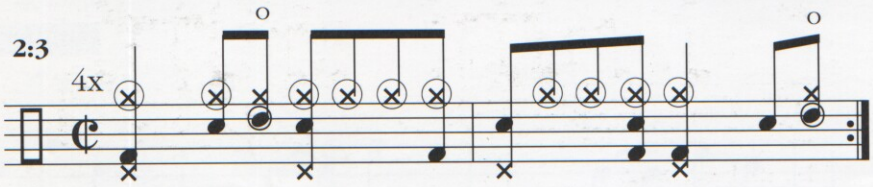


Example 2 Here's the same rhythm, moving the right hand over to the cowbell, with the left foot playing the guiro part

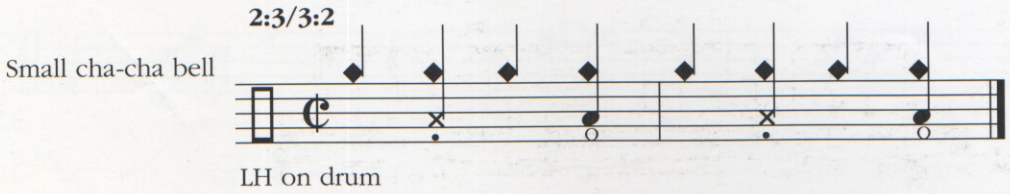


Here are some possibilities for the more driving parts of the tune:

Example 3 Here's more of a rock version of the cha-cha, played up on the cymbal with the clave on the snare drum



Within the Latin context, the cha-cha is best characterized by the constant quarter-notes the timbale player plays on the small cha-cha bell.

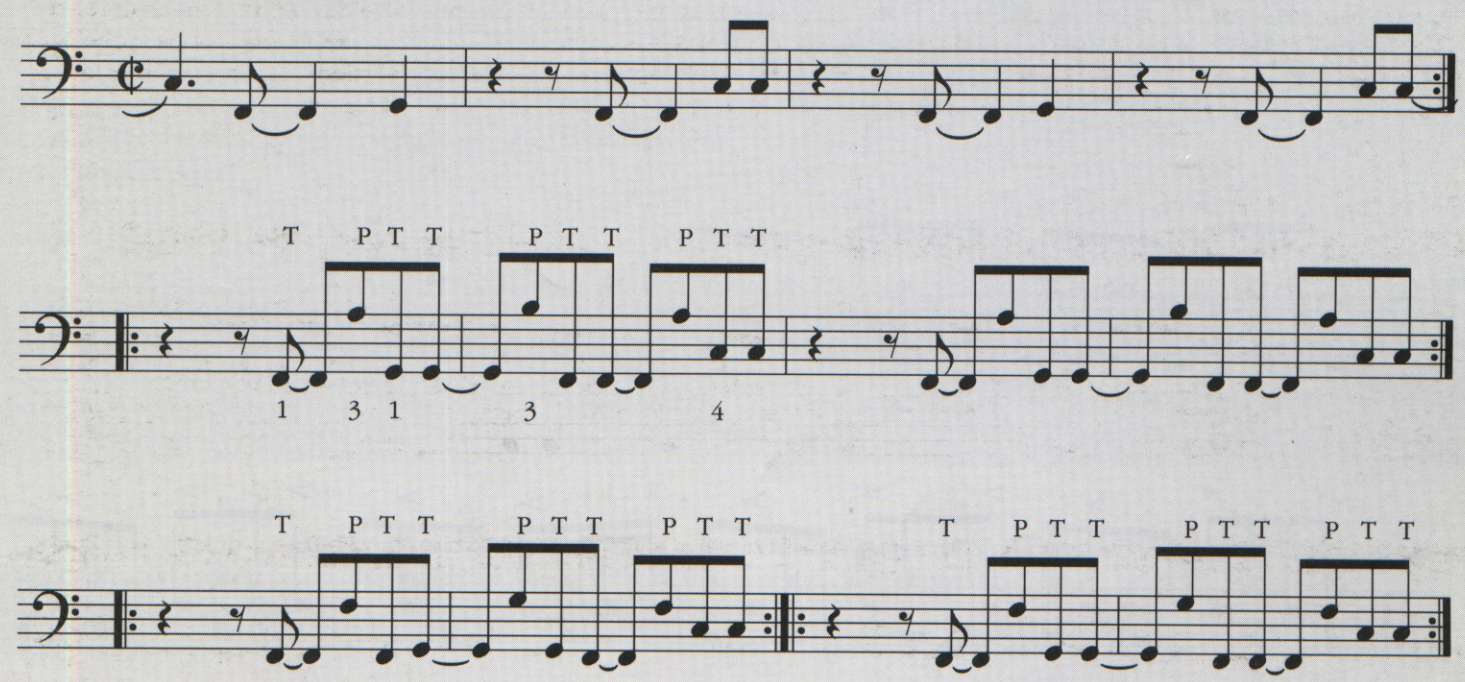


Remember, the cha-cha can also be played in 3:2 clave.

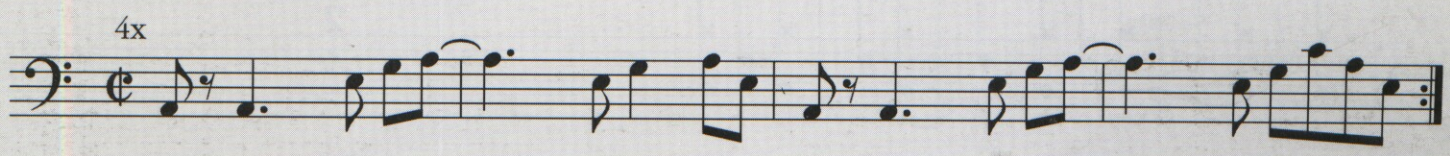
The bass tumbaos in the cha-cha often resemble the tumbaos of Chapter 1 played at a slower tempo. A good example of this is found in the guajira groove (Chapter 1, Example 6). Slap songo lines can also work well at the cha-cha tempo.

Here are some examples:

Example 1 Cha-cha with funk variations



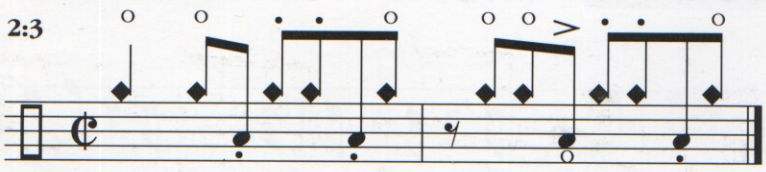
Example 2 Another basic cha-cha line



MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique is another rhythm which has often been used in a rock and funk context. It forms the heartbeat of quite a few of Steve Gadd's Latin grooves, such as the drum part on Paul Simon's "Late In The Evening."*

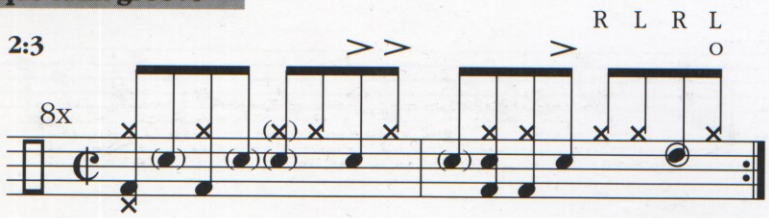
Here is the basic mozambique played on timbales



LH stick on drum

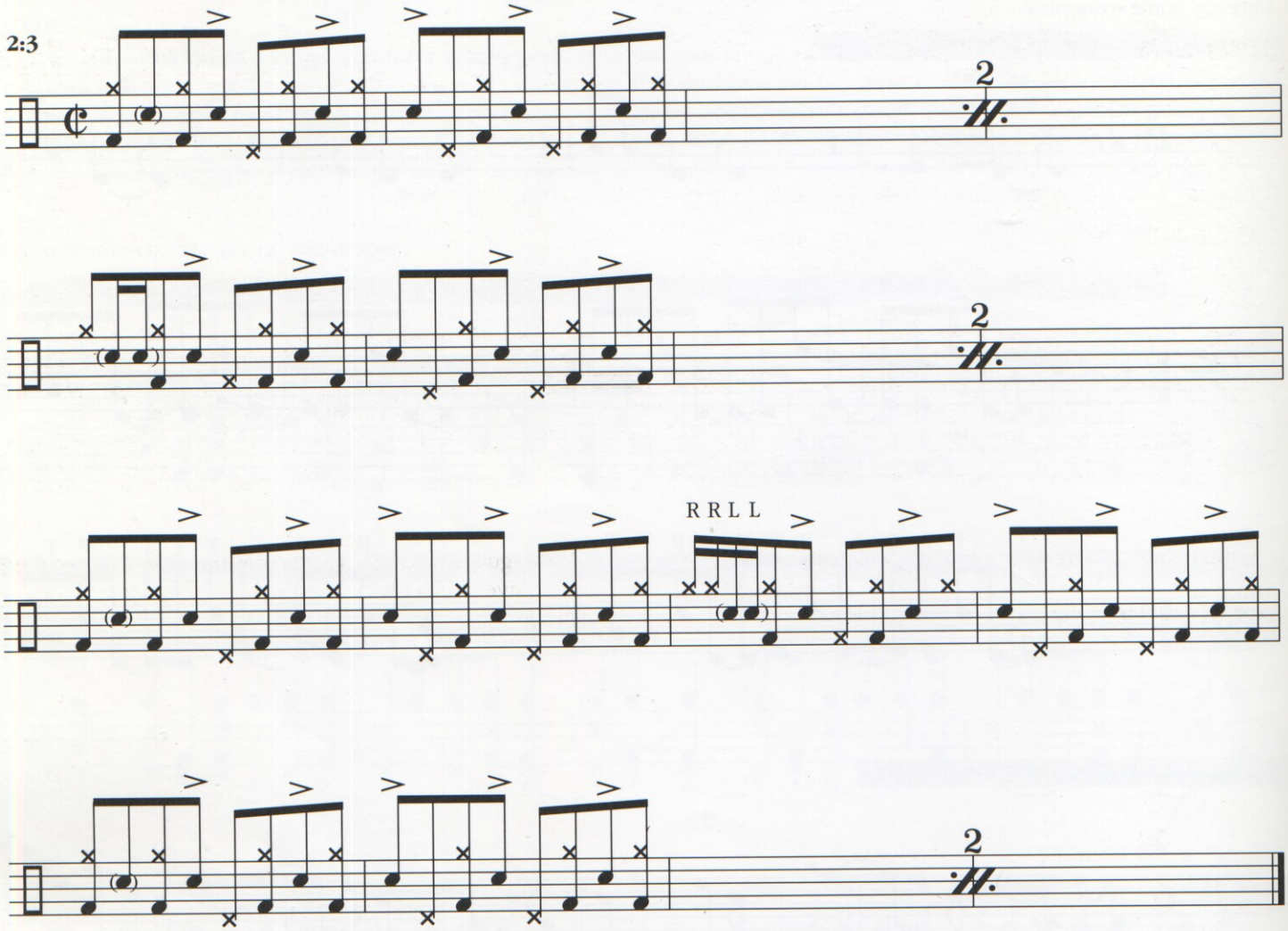
Once again, we see the heavy accent on the "and" of "2" in the 3-part of the clave. Here is a funky version of the mozambique that grooves nicely over a broad spectrum of tempos. Part of the funk comes from the bass drum playing both "1" and "2" of the first bar of the clave:

Example 4 Here's a mozambique funk groove



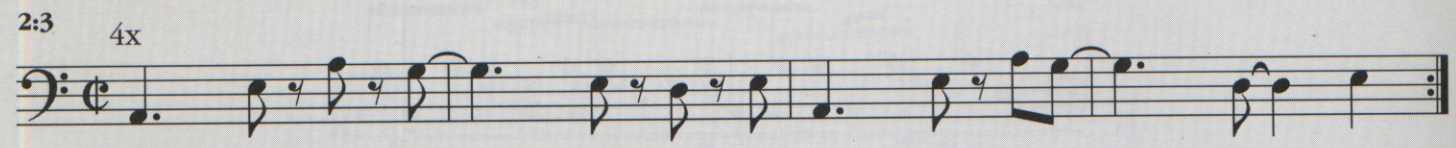
*Also see Steve's instructional videos "Up Close" and "In Session," available from DCI Music Video.

Example 5 This is another mozambique pattern which uses a concept of Roberto Pettacia's, where you use the left foot and the right hand on the hi-hat—also note the clave on the snare drum

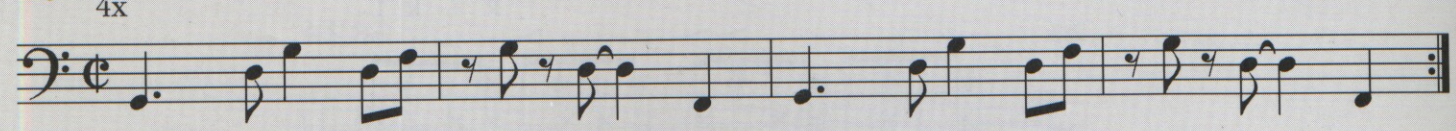


Like the drums, the bass line for the mozambique often starts on the downbeat of the 2:3 clave. Also characteristic is the rhythmic pattern of the first bar and the 7th of the chord on the 8th-note preceeding the second bar.

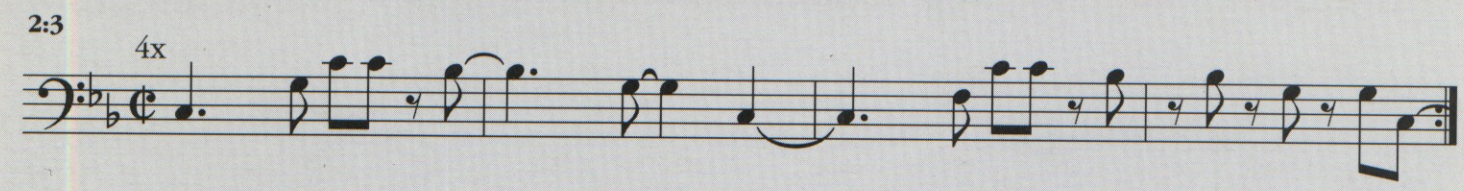
Example 3 Traditional mozambique line



Example 4 This is a modern variation on the mozambique "Luis's Groove"

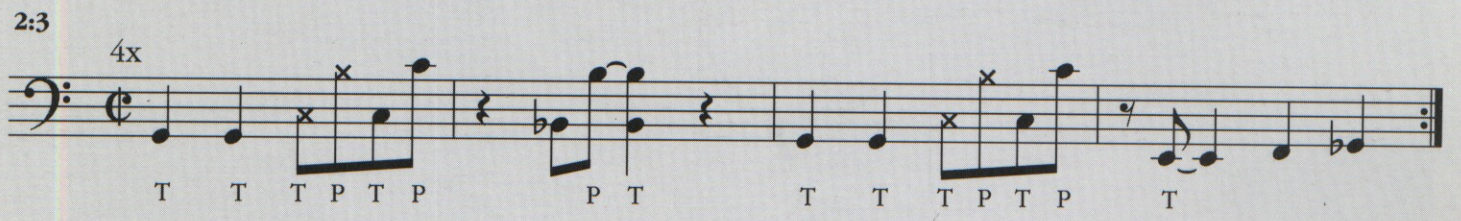


Example 5 This is another modern variation on the mozambique "Irio's Tumbao"



This next line matches up with the mozambique timbale pattern:

Funk–Mozambique



In certain cha-cha and mozambique grooves the downbeat will be incorporated, whether on the 2-side or the 3-side of the clave. By and large, we have only seen this to occur in the New Orleans–guaguanco grooves, where the downbeat of the 3-side of the clave is played.

Lincoln

Mike Stern

Oscar Hernández

Bill O'Connell (Photo courtesy George Frazier)

Robby

NOTES ON THE TUNES

"Mambo For Tajrid"

Oscar Hernandez wrote this for us as an example of a typical salsa structure of verse (melody), montuno (coro), mambo, verse and out. Besides being a well-established salsa pianist and arranger, Oscar is also known for bringing a more progressive style to salsa writing, most notably in his arrangements for Rubén Blades.

Drums:
The drum grooves demonstrate some possibilities on the kit within the idiom, while not playing songo. The verse is straight cascara with the rumba clave, which seems to swing a lot better at this tempo and without percussion. The B section of the verse goes to the son clave with the backbeat on the 2-side of the clave. The montuno (synth solo) uses the basic timbale bell ride, while in the mambo things get a little looser with the left hand playing against a cascara-like pattern on the cymbal. The fills during the band breaks almost become part of the breaks, a little like filling while playing a groove. The key here is not to fill around the figures, but rather within them.

Bass:
This tune begins with a 4-bar tumbao. The added 9th in this figure gives it a jazz flavor. Section B is a breakdown feature for the bass–try to feel the clave when phrasing your own fills. Oscar's synth solo at D is the traditional montuno section–here I just lay on a straight tumbao. A typical device for the mambo includes a strong unison line with the other instruments, as demonstrated here at section E.

Example Breakdown (from Chapter 1)

Drums
The intro is example 1 played on the cymbal bell.
A is also example 1
B is example 4
D (Montuno solo) is example 2

Bass
D is based on Example 1

"Yo Me Songo"

This tune came about as a group effort with Bill O'Connell. We wanted to show a songo style which the three of us have developed over the years as a rhythm section for Dave Valentin.

Drums:
The drums begin at A with the basic songo cross-stick pattern, the bass drum catching some of the movements within the bass tumbao. The second time around, the right hand hi-hat is added to the bell, spicing it up without getting in the way. At B, a funkier sound starts to be implied and the extra snare hits are played in unison with some of the bass slaps. The breakdown at C starts with the songo backbeat, riding on the hi-hat, and dropping the quarters-notes on the bell, which finally leads into a straight backbeat as the bass line gets played in its entirety. This line is really funk, but it's still in clave, and still feels like songo. By catching parts of the line with the kick and a hi-hat groove, you can still add the backbeat with the right kind of bass line without sounding like you just started playing "2" and "4" to make a Latin groove sound funky. The groove then moves back to the songo backbeat over the piano montuno, which goes into the ride-out songo for Bill's solo.

Bass:
In the A section, the bass plays a simple melody that matches up with Robby's bass drum. I wanted to show here how the bass can carry a melody while still playing a tumbao. B is a slap songo. Note that in the 17th bar of this section, I alter the line to make a hit with the snare. In the breakdown I introduce a line which is developed into a funkier line at D as the tune builds. I wanted to demonstrate here how the bass can play a line that stays with the clave and keeps the spirit of songo while the band goes from Latin to funk and back again.

Example Breakdown (from Chapter 2)

Drums
A First time is from Example 1
A Second time uses the right hand of Example 6
B Derived from Example 8
C Example 12
F Piano solo is derived from Example 13

Bass:
A is an elaboration of example 1.
Sections B and E are similar to Example 8; in the tune, the last 8th-note from the 2-side is tied over to the 1st note on the 3-side.

"Hotel National" (guaguanco)

In this tune we wanted to link up the more traditional guaguanco with the funk guaguanco, so we moved back and forth between the two feels.

Drums:

The right hand hi-hat sets up the clave the first time through [A] then adds the conga parts on the toms the second time through. Meanwhile, the clave is still implied with the right hand ghosting on the snare during the funk sections. For the second half of the piano solo there's more of a block chord montuno-like feel going on. I felt this needed a slight change, so I went to the cymbal to open it up. Finally, we go back to the original guaguanco, with sweeps on the hi-hat the last time around.

Bass

In this tune the bass plays folkloric-style lines stretched out to fit the melody while still keeping in clave. These are alternated with guaguanco funk lines. I play fills in the bars before sections [B] and [D] that anticipate the funk feels and smooth the transitions.

Example Breakdown (from Chapter 3)

Drums

[A] is a slower version of Example 4
[A1] [C] and [E] are based on Examples 1 and 2
[B] and [D] are based on Examples 5–7

Bass

[A] is derived from example 2 begining on the 3-side
[B] is like the 2nd part of Example 5
[C] is similar to Example 3
[D] is the 1st part of Example 5
[E] is like Example 1

"Afro Waltz"

This tune, written by Bill O"Connell, is a good vehicle for exploring the various time feels which can be superimposed over the Afro-Cuban 6/8 groove, particularly in the jazz and blues vein. Bill is an exciting improviser and we hope you enjoy playing with him as much as we do.

Drums:

Once you get past the 6/8 groove, you can begin to think about whatever time feel is coming next so that the transitions will feel comfortable and the sections will flow into each other. Naturally, these feel changes are not always planned in advance; concentrate on making yourself comfortable moving back and forth between them, depending on what the soloist is doing.

Bass:

The pulse in both the "jazz four" and shuffle moves in quarter-notes. I distinguish between the two feels by using more accidentals and chord movement in the jazz section, while in the shuffle I stick mostly to a pentatonic approach. Similarly, there is a slightly different attitude between the 6/8 heads and the jazz waltz tag—in the waltz I put a little bit of forward motion and bounce on the pulse, while in the 6/8 I focus more on the middle of the beat.

Example Breakdown (from Chapter 4)

Drums

First time through the chart is a version of Example 2

Bass

Uses Example 1 (1st variation for 6/8 heads)
Example 2 for shuffle section

"Blue Cha-Cha"

This quartet tune shows how a cha-cha feel can be applied to a medium rock groove. We came up with a chord progression and Mike and Oscar worked up a melody to fit the mood.

Drums:

The left hand is basically playing clave throughout the tune; whether as cross-stick (for the head and piano solo), or snare drum (for the guitar solo). The bell pattern is used to give a lift the second time through the head and piano solo. The guitar solo starts out as half-time rock, mixing single backbeats with two hits on the 2-side of the clave. The double-time licks are played in unison with the bass. Finally, when I go up to the cymbal, the clave goes into a straight rock backbeat for a while. The half-time and the straight backbeats are two common ways of rocking out on a cha-cha groove, but playing the whole or part of the clave on the snare can also sound pretty strong for a different approach.

Bass:

These are typical lines that develop into a funk-rock style at Mike's solo. On these slower kinds of grooves, I concentrate on strong, even notes to help keep the tempo from picking up, especially when going from a pizz to a slap line. Note the double time hits with Robby in bars 9 and 13 of the guitar solo.

Example Breakdown (from Chapter 4)

Drums

Intro and 1st [A] is Example 1

2nd A and 2nd [B] is Example 2

2nd half of guitar solo in [C] is Example 3

Bass

[A] derived from Example 2

Mike's solo is similar rhythmically to Example 1 (funk variations)

"Metal Mozambique"

We came up with a strong funk feel derived from the mozambique rhythm and decided to just rock out on it. We wanted to show how a Latin-oriented groove could be brought into a rock power trio format. The tune illustrates that not everyone has to be playing or even thinking Latin all the time to still make it work. Mike Stern was the perfect choice for rounding out the trio with his powerful soloing style and instinct for bringing out the essence of the groove.

Drums:

Throughout this tune, the drums and bass are almost always in unison. The little changes within the groove at [A] are played together, and the line at [B] called for straight rock quarters on the snare. The solo section [C] is sort of a pared-down version of the original groove, with the toms playing a more typical mozambique part.

Bass

These lines are tightly locked in with the drum patterns. I use the slapping technique all the way through to get a hard definition to match Mike's and Robby's intensity.

Example Breakdown (from Chapter 5)

Drums:

The [A] groove is an elaboration on Example 1

Bass

The [A] section uses Example 6

CLOSING

The reader should realize that there are a multitude of Latin rhythms in the Afro-Cuban tradition, not to mention those of Brazil, Haiti, The Dominican Republic, and many other South American and Caribbean countries. Also, we have not touched upon the *bata* drums, whose Afro-Cuban rhythmic forms could make up a lifetime of study.

In closing, we hope that we have provided a means of capturing the attitude of some common Afro-Cuban grooves, and shown how they can complement some of today's contemporary music styles. What have been presented here are just some ideas and possibilities as to where these rhythms can go. Ultimately, you should feel free to take them somewhere new, discovering new grooves that work well in your own musical situation. This is the best way to keep the music growing: by understanding and maintaining the integrity of its roots, while at the same time doing away with preconceptions, allowing the music to reach more and more people.

MAMBO FOR TAJRID

2:3

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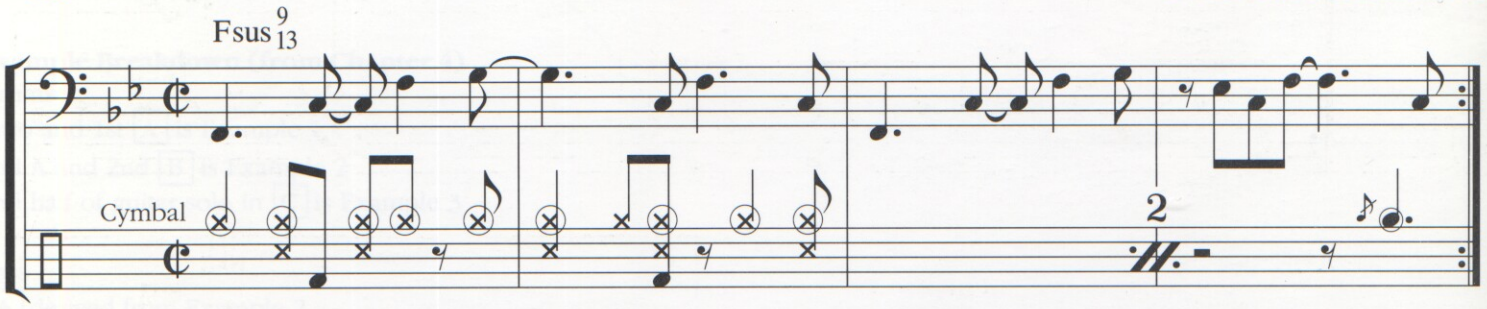
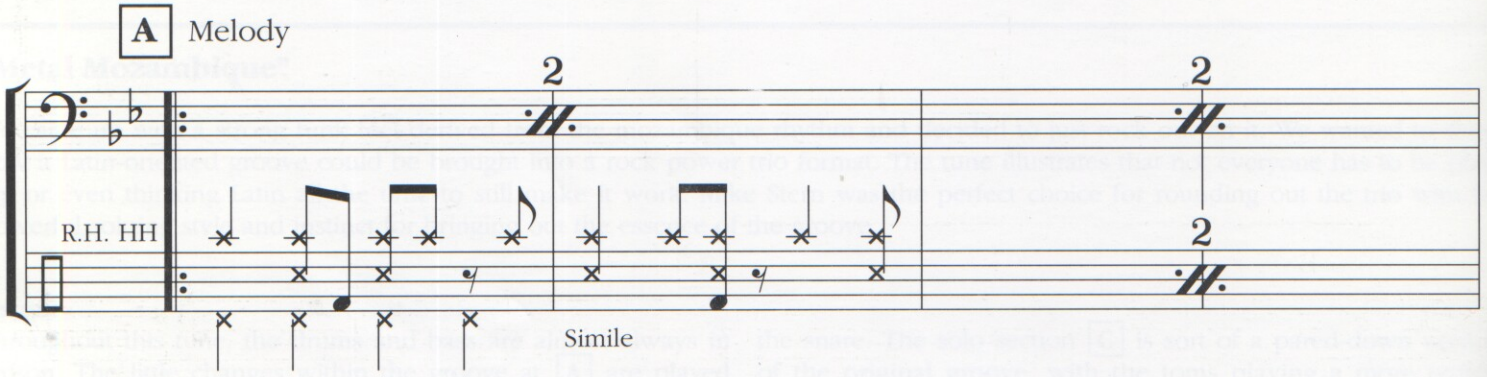
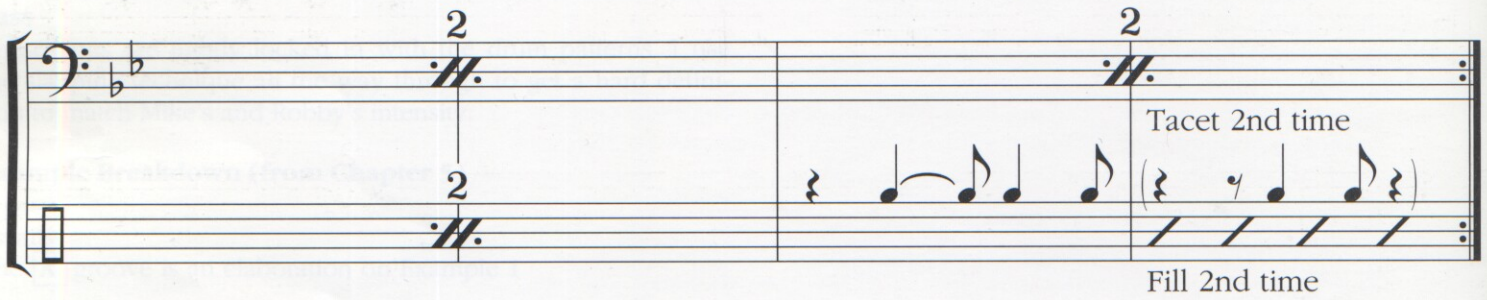
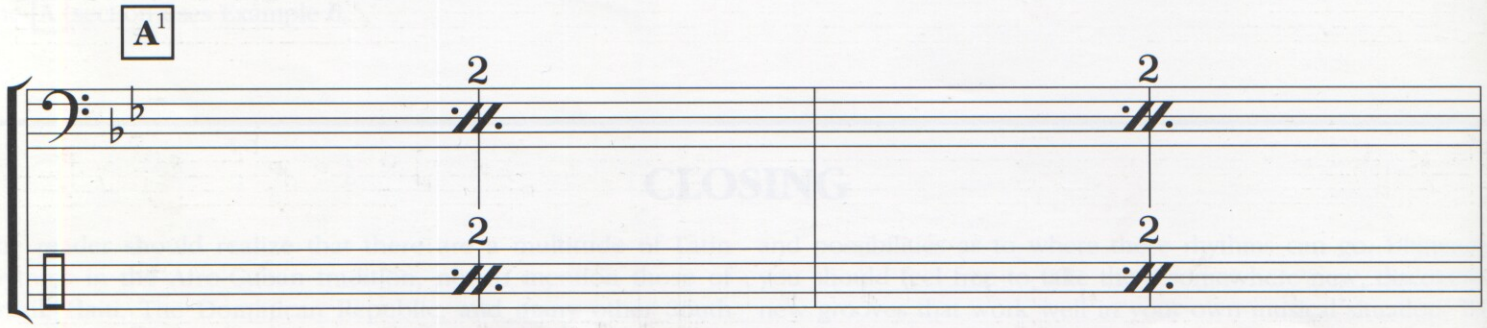
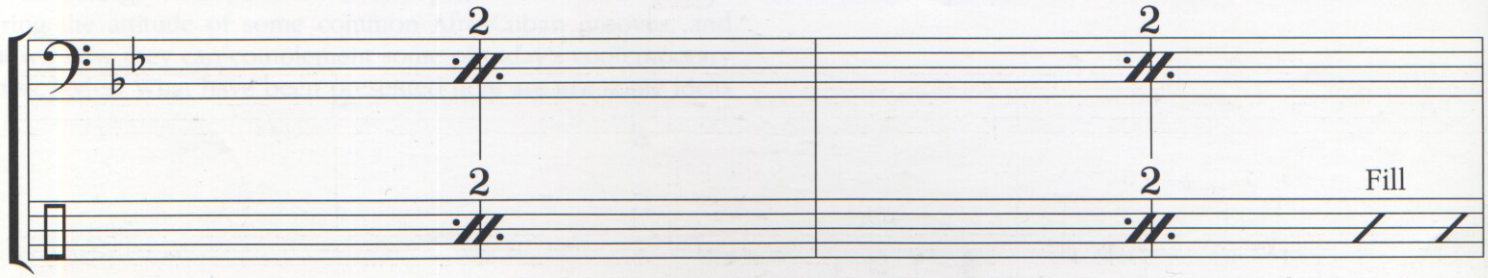
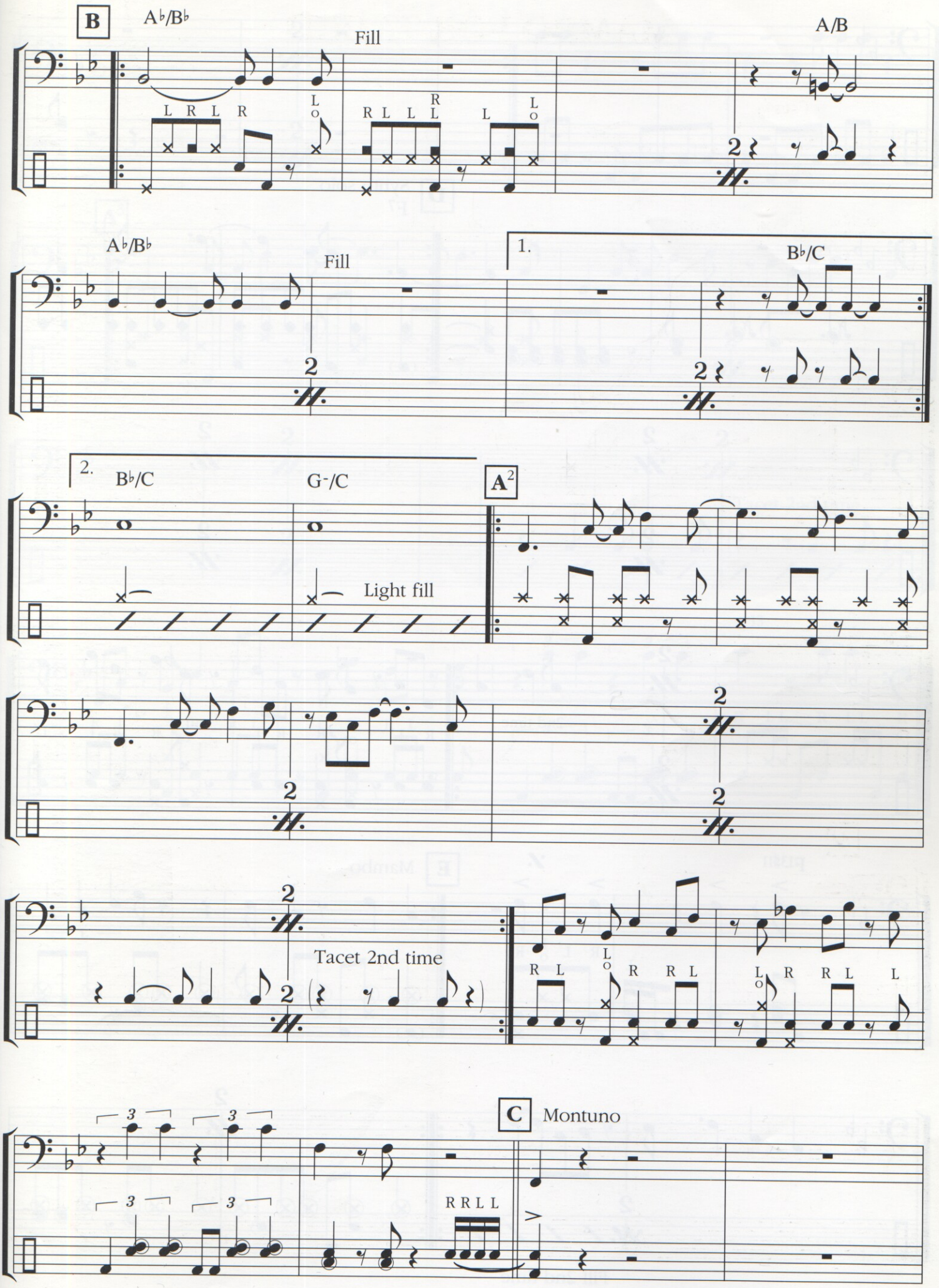


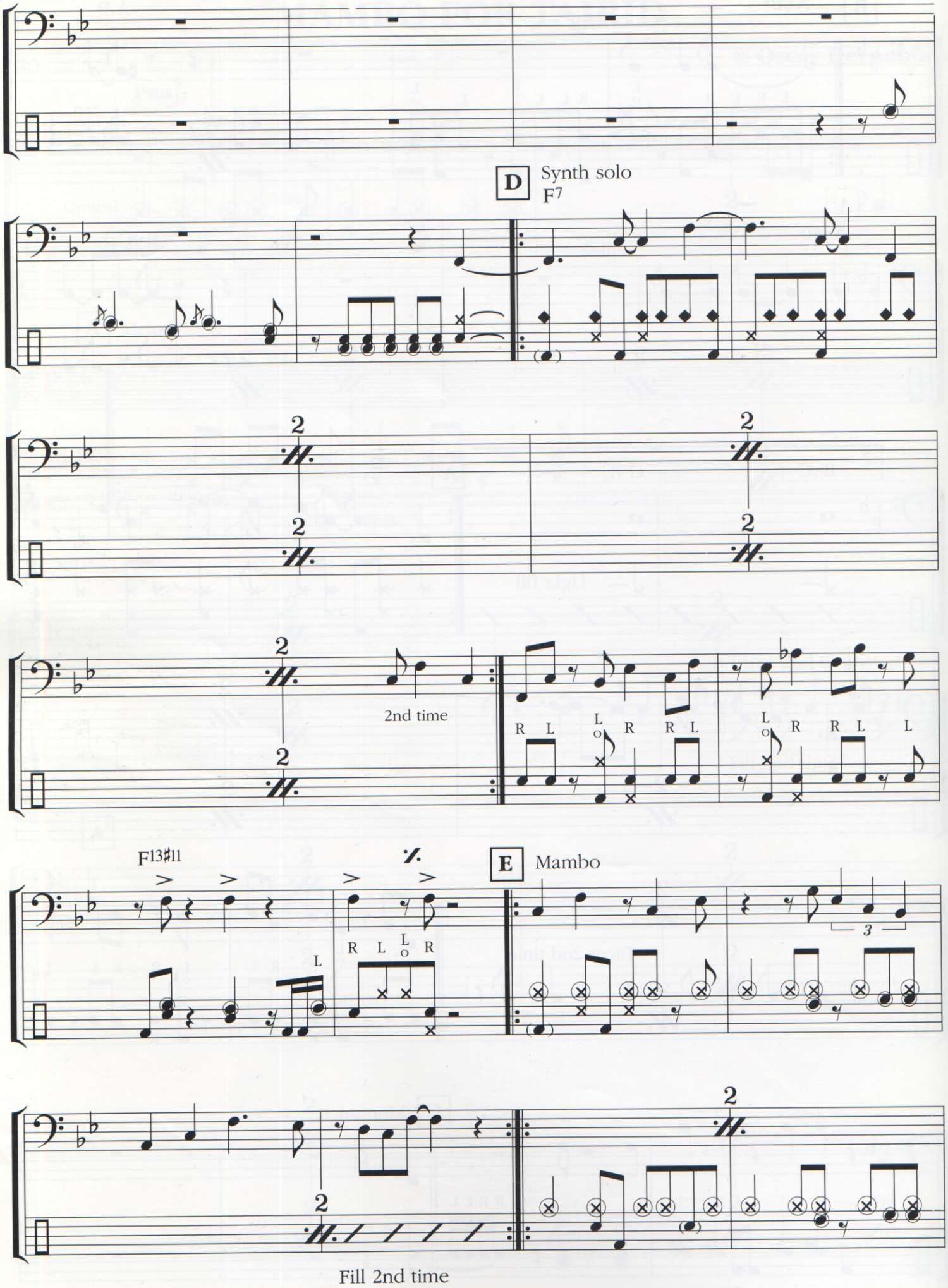


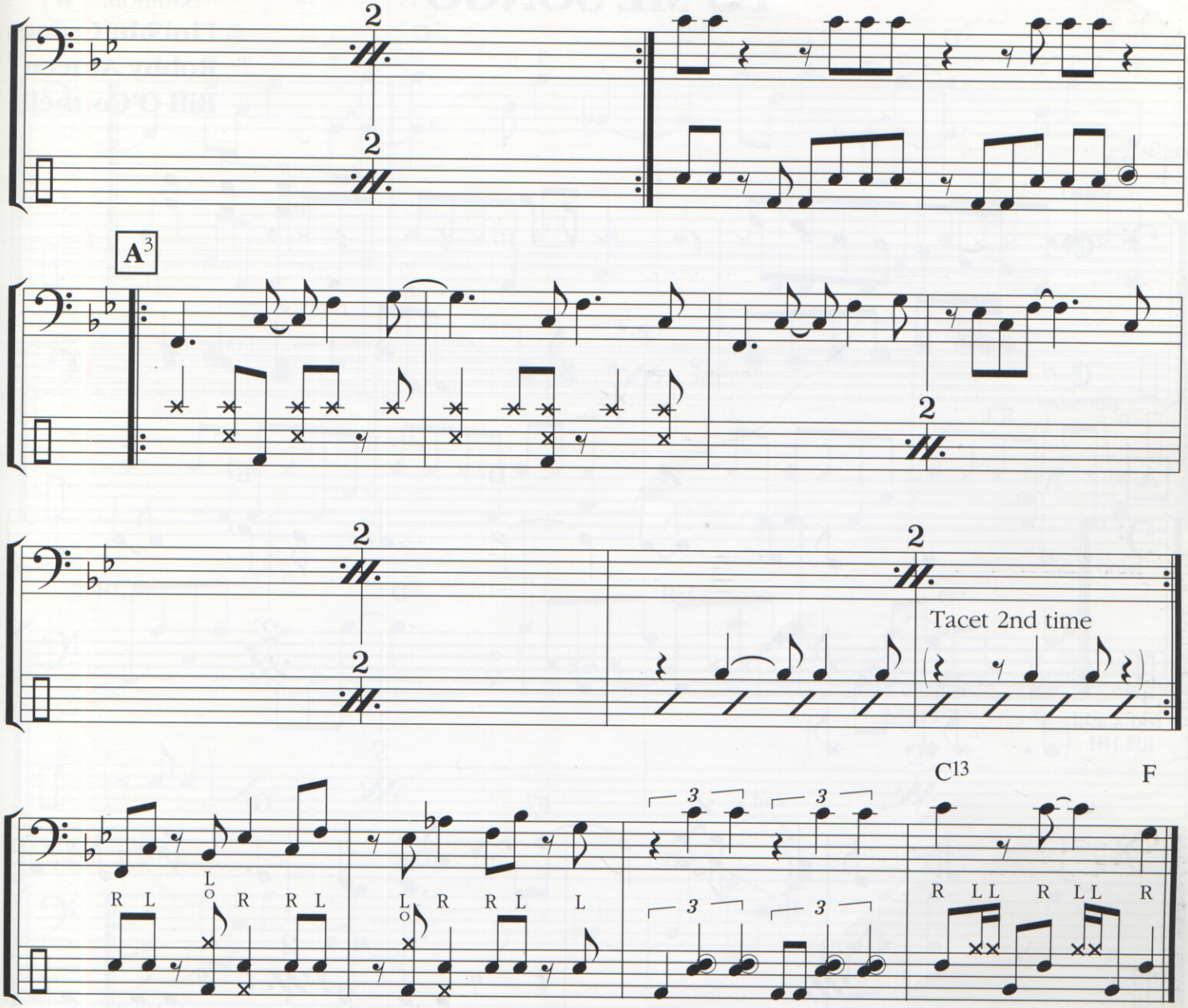







B
A♭/B♭
Fill
A/B
L R L R
R L L R L
L
A♭/B♭
Fill
1.
B♭/C
2.
B♭/C
G-/C
Light fill
A2
Tacet 2nd time
R L R R L
L R R L L
C
Montuno
R R L L


D
Synth solo
F7
2nd time
R L L R R L
L R R L L
F13♯11
R L L R
L
E
Mambo
3
Fill 2nd time


A3
Tacet 2nd time
C13
F
R L L R R L
L R R L L
R L L R L L R

YO ME SONGO

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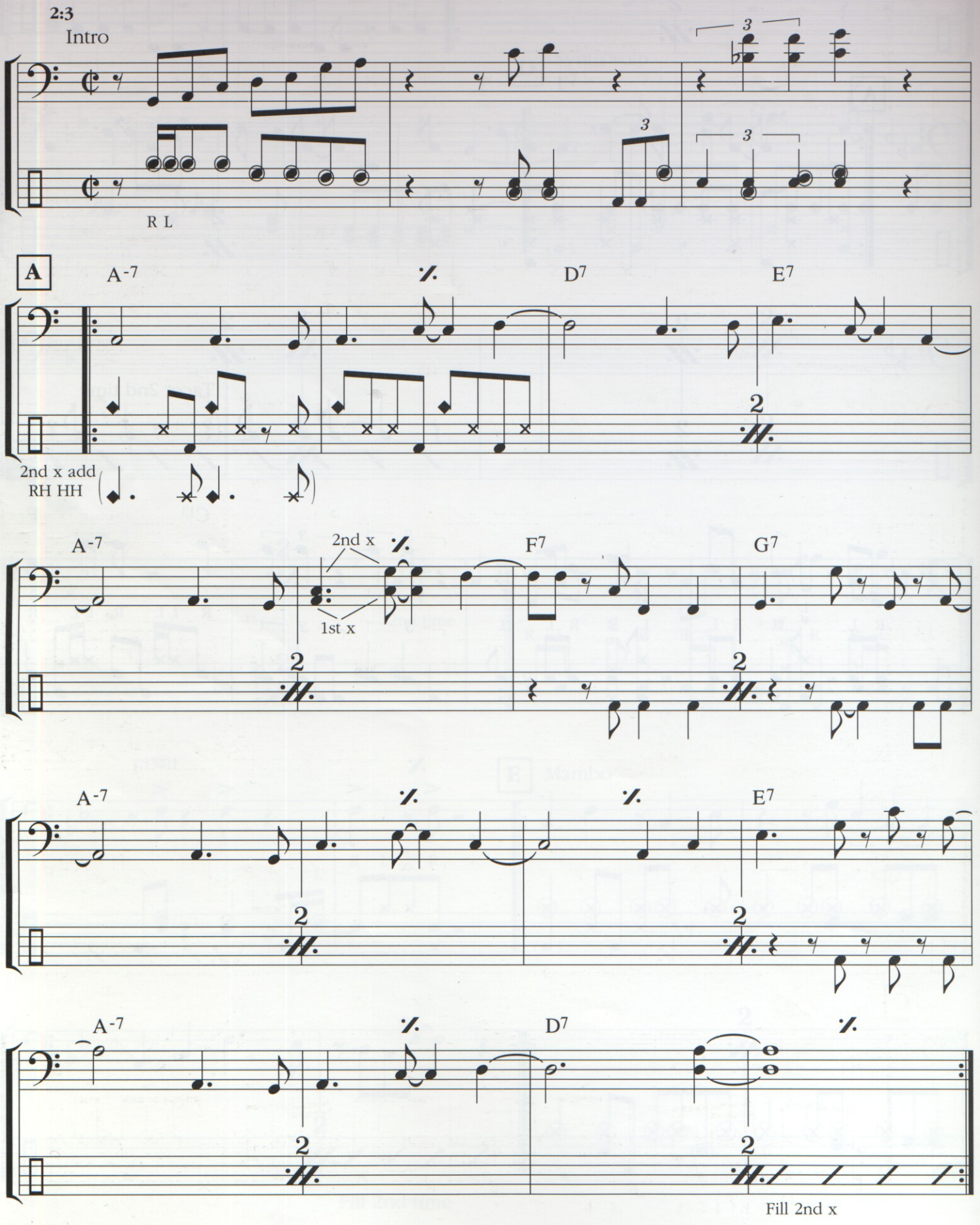
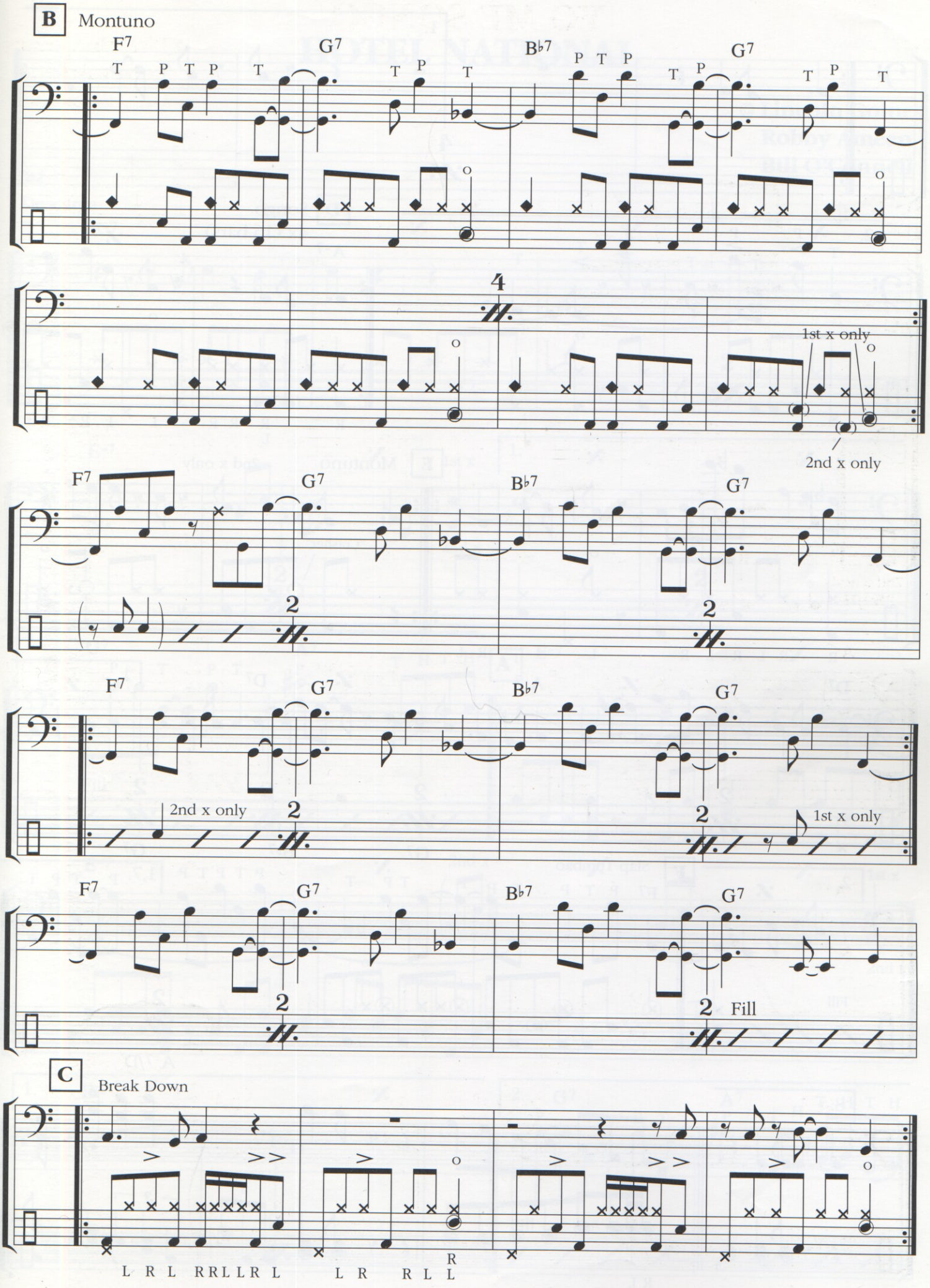
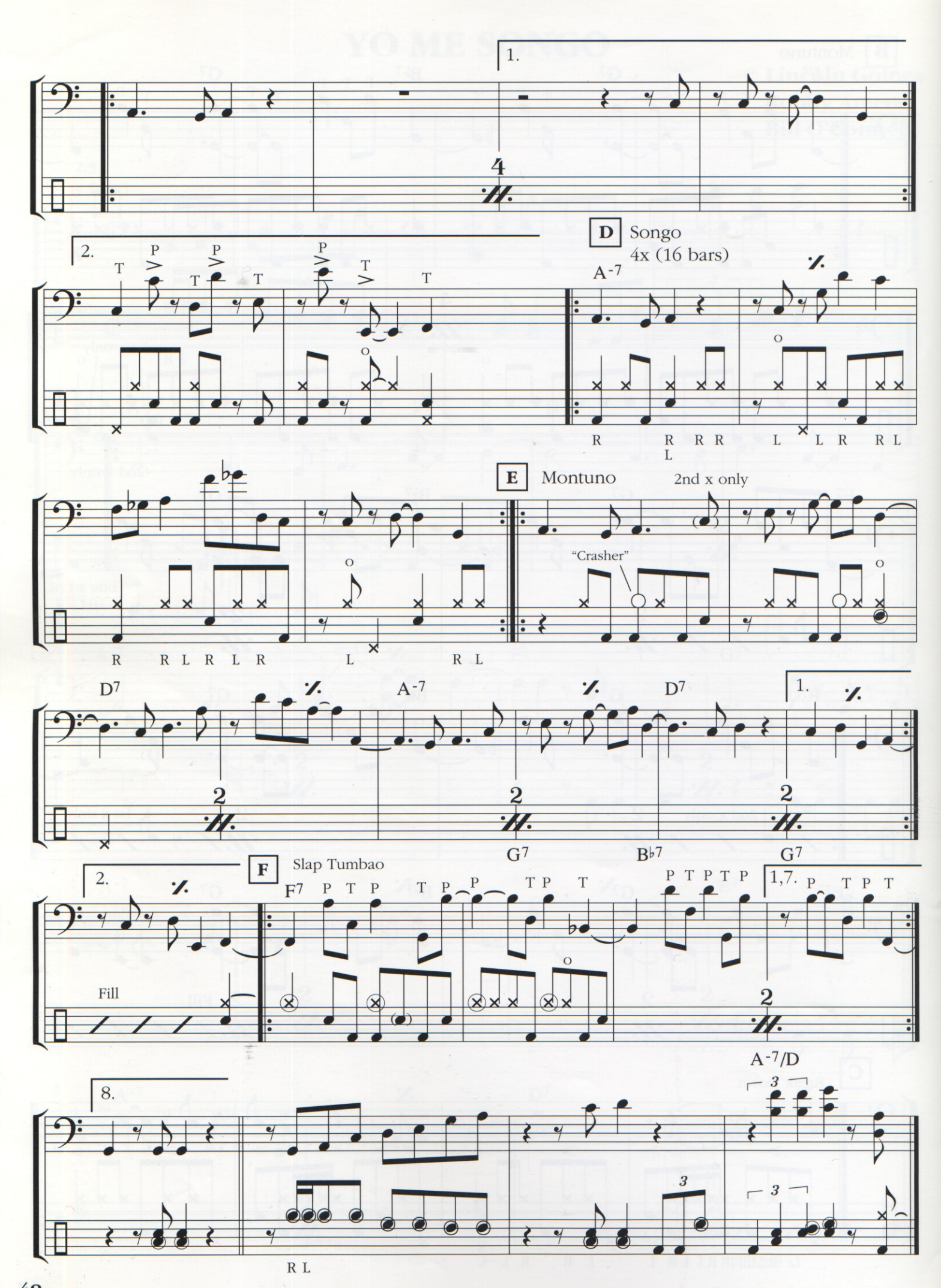



B
Montuno
F7
G7
B♭7
G7
T P T P T T P T P T P T P T P T
4
1st x only
2nd x only
2
2nd x only
1st x only
Fill
C
Break Down
L R L RRLLR L
L R R L R L


1.
2.
D Songo
4x (16 bars)
A-7
E Montuno
2nd x only
"Crasher"
D7
A-7
D7
1.
G7
B♭7
G7
2.
F Slap Tumbao
F7
Fill
1,7.
A-7/D
8.

HOTEL NATIONAL

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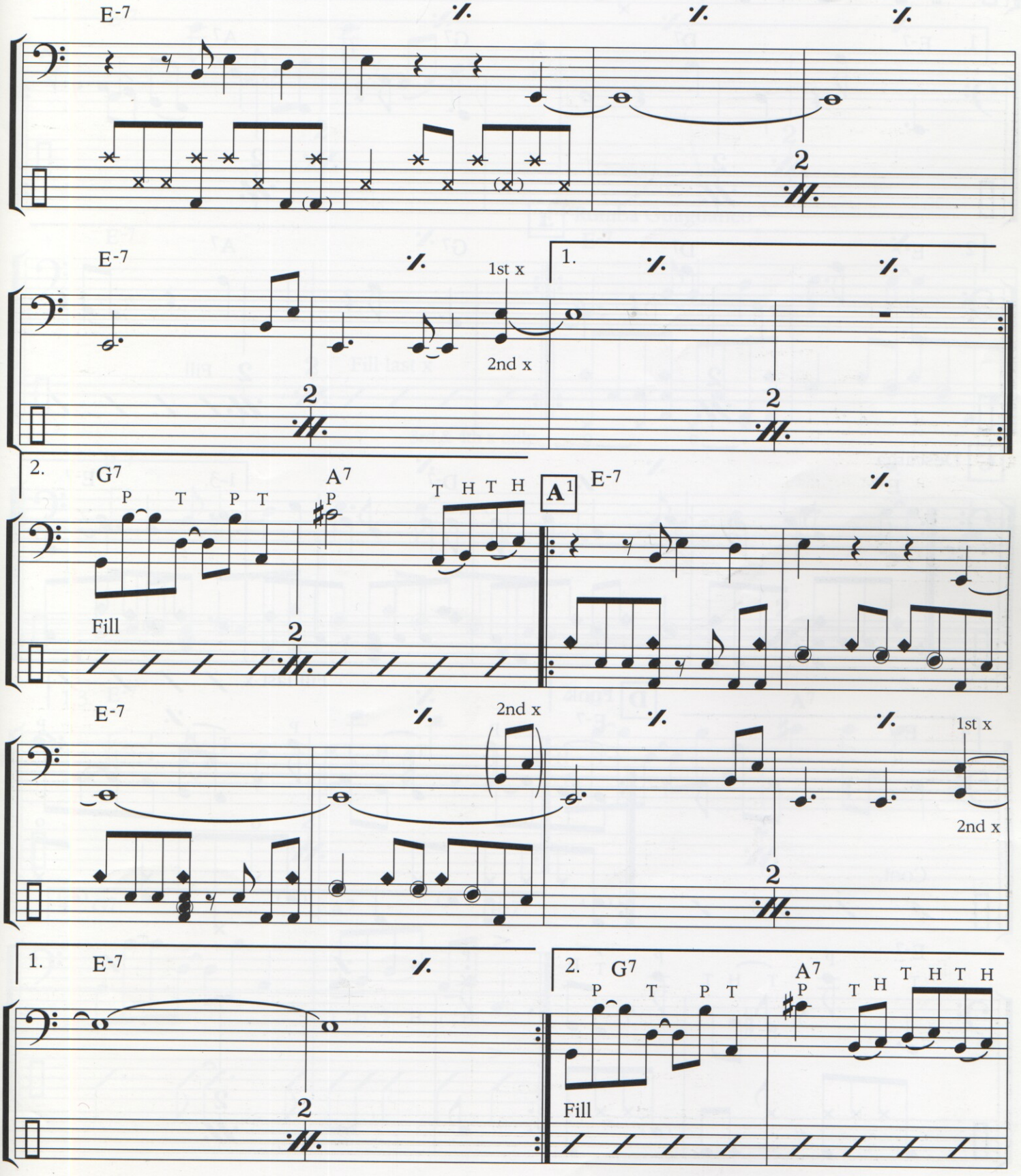
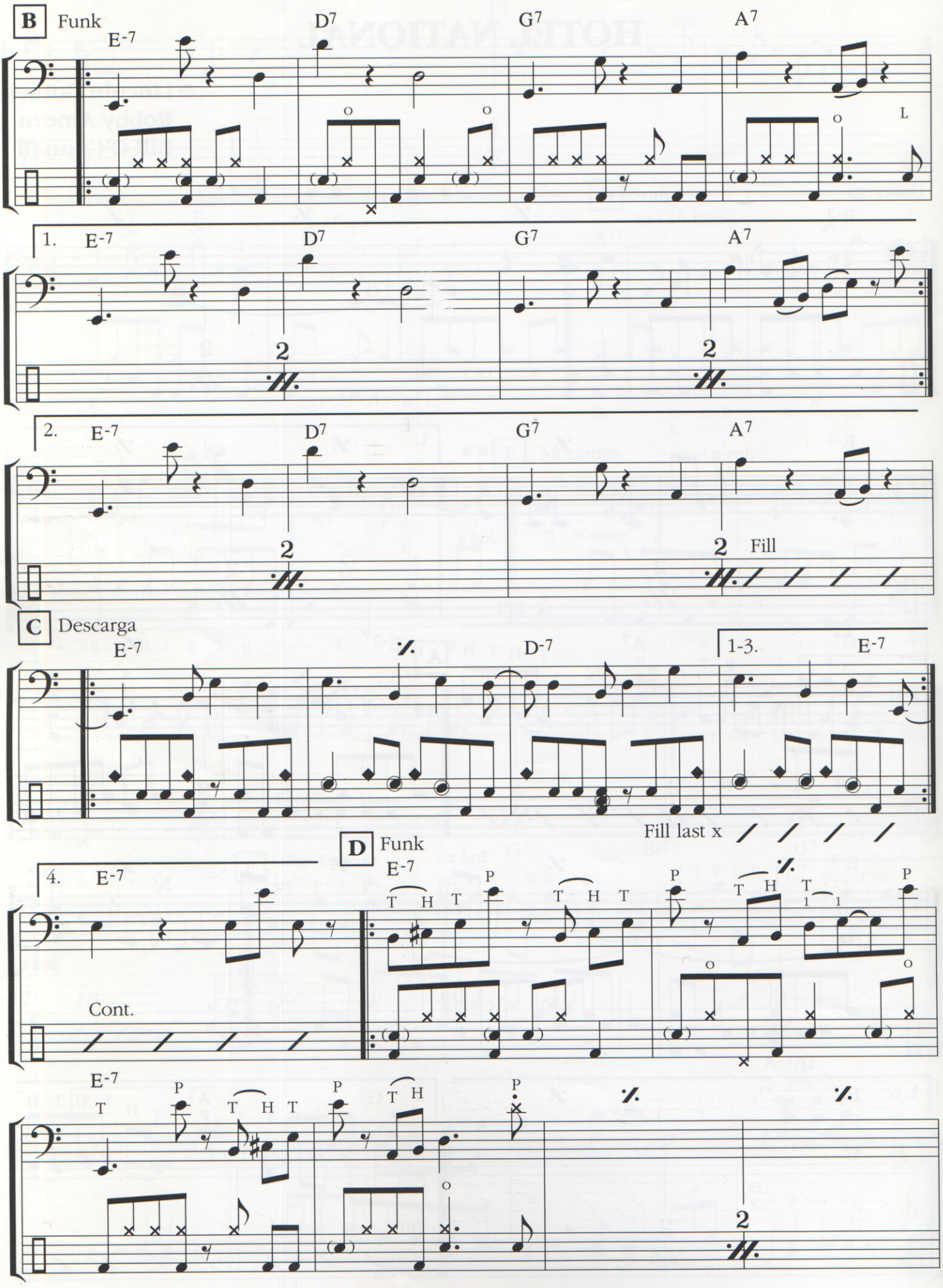
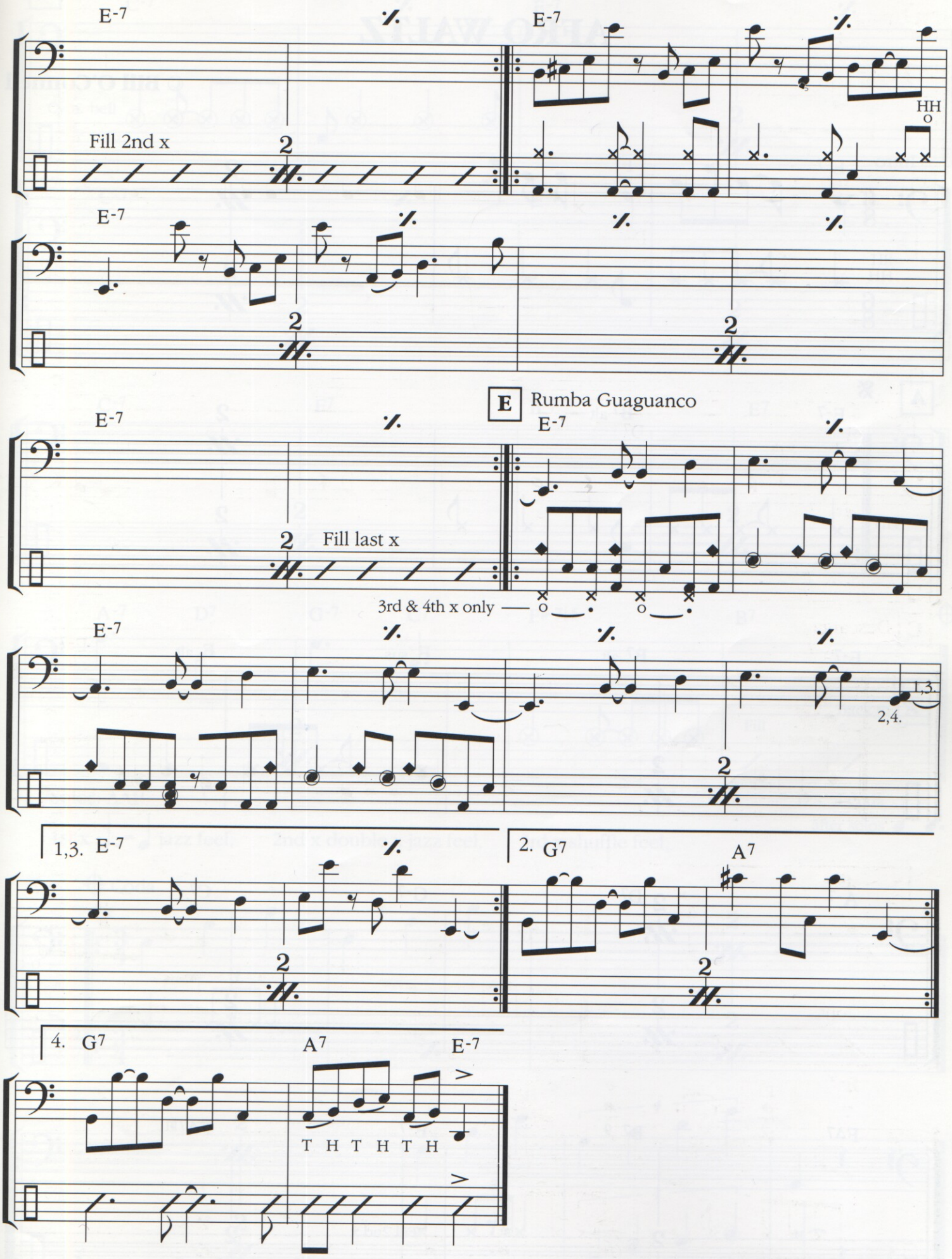
3:2

Descarga




B Funk
E-7
D7
G7
A7
1.
2.
2
Fill
C Descarga
D-7
1-3.
Fill last x
D Funk
4.
Cont.


E-7
Fill 2nd x
HH
E-7
E
Rumba Guaguanco
E-7
Fill last x
3rd & 4th x only
E-7
1,3.
2,4.
1,3. E-7
2. G7
A7
4. G7
A7
E-7
T H T H T H

AFRO WALTZ

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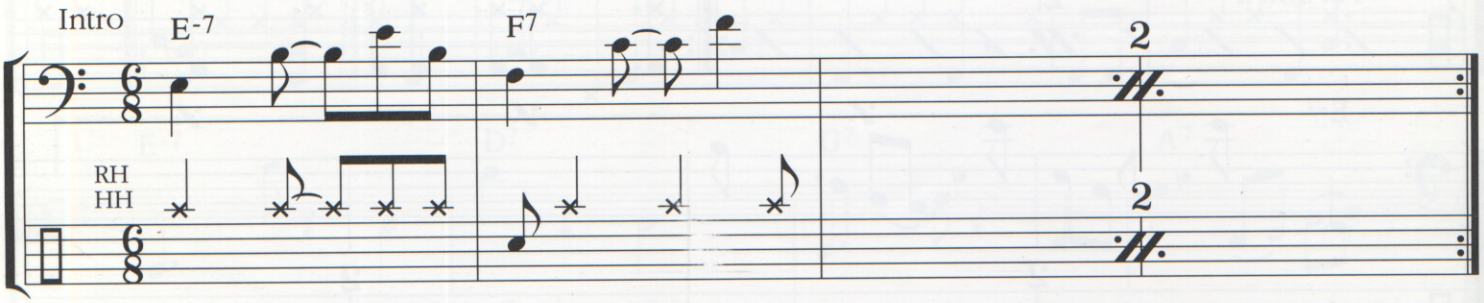

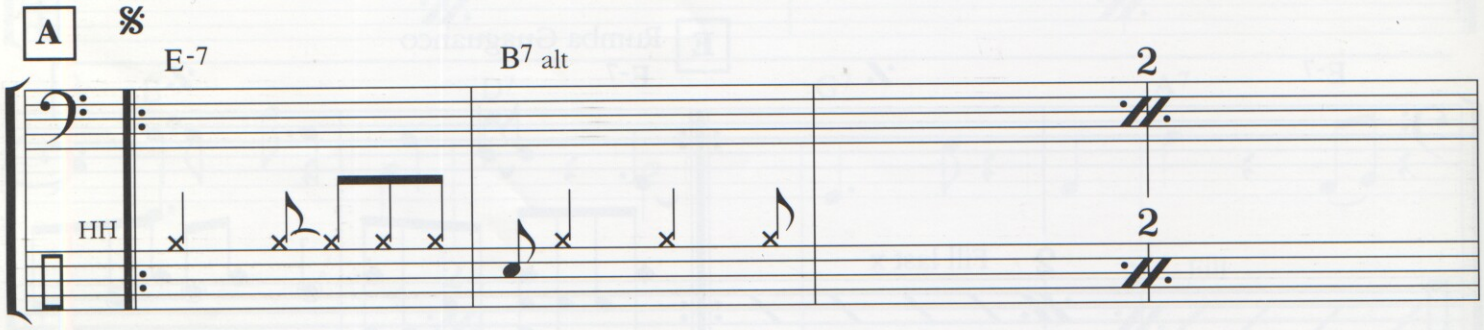

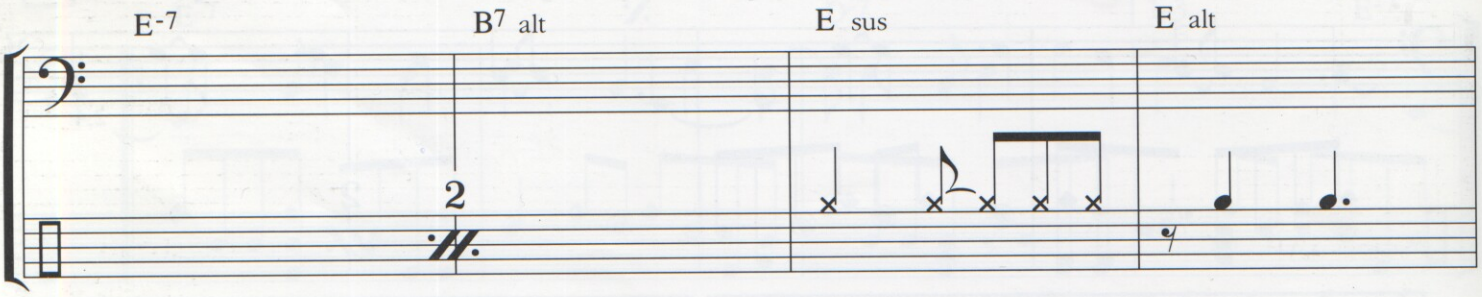

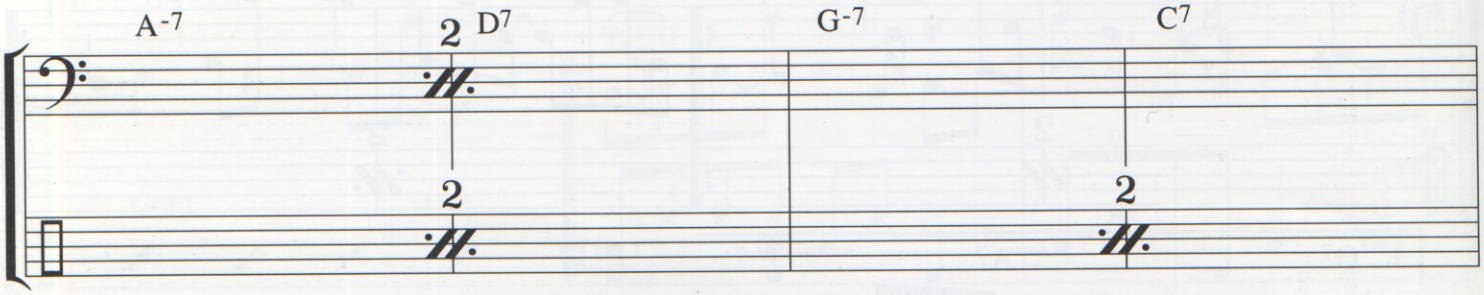

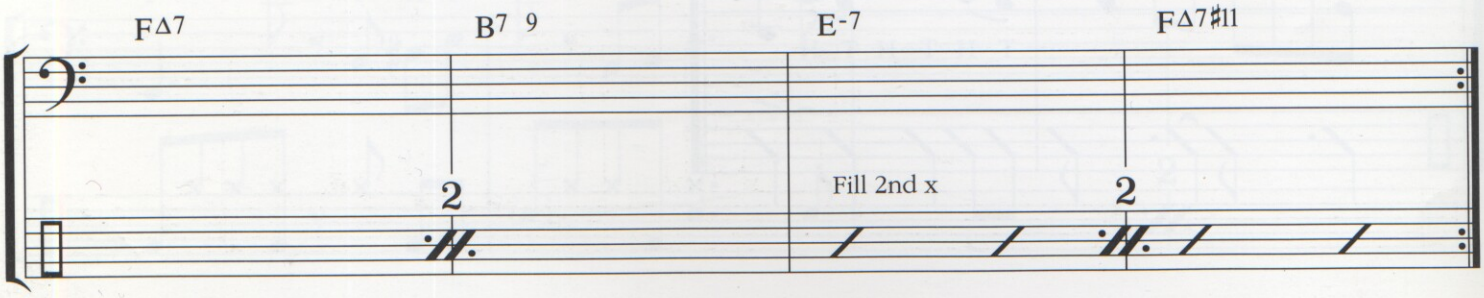

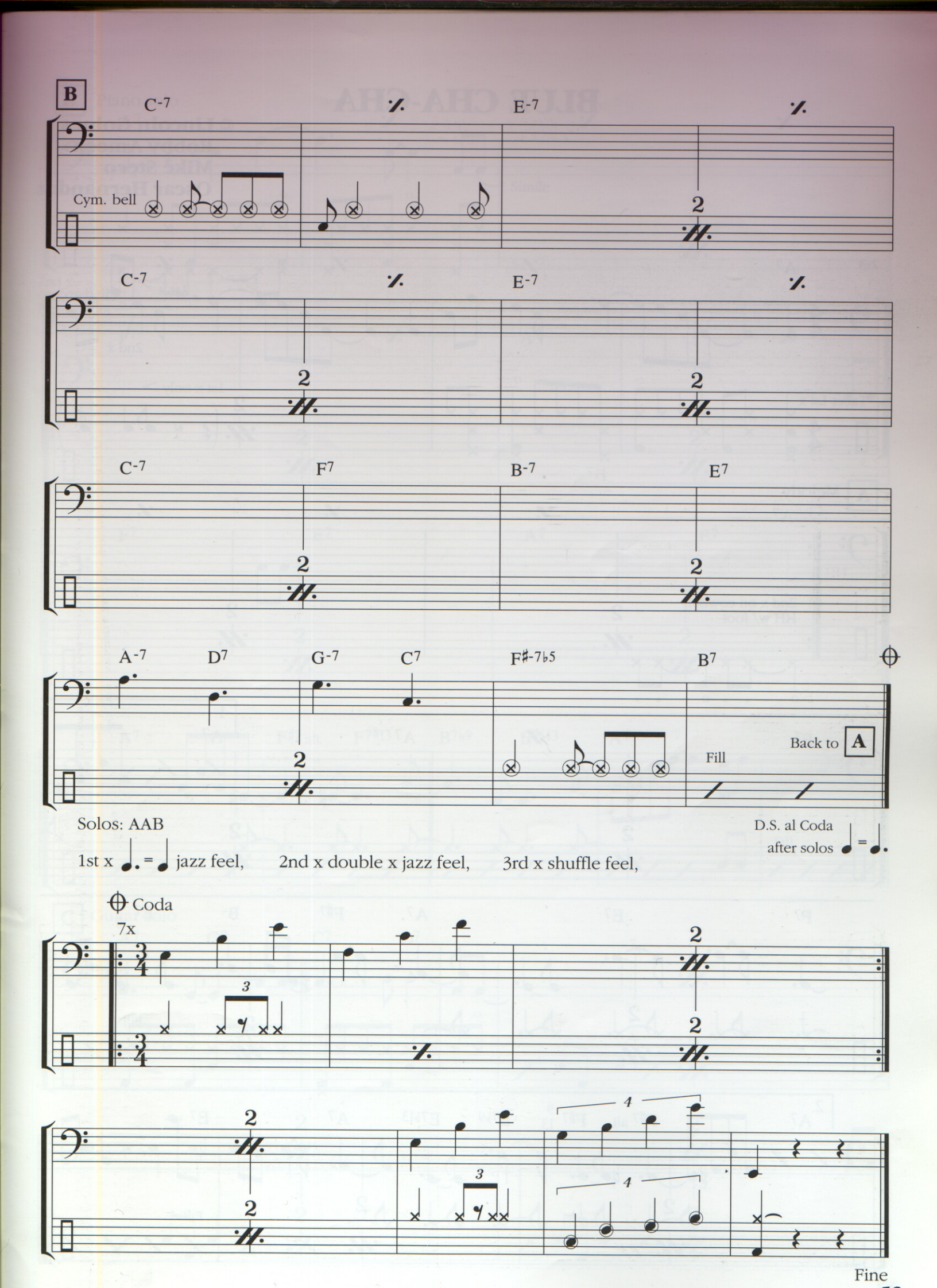
B
C-7
E-7
Cym. bell
C-7
E-7
C-7
F7
B-7
E7
A-7
D7
G-7
C7
F#-7b5
B7
Back to A
Fill
Solos: AAB
D.S. al Coda
after solos
1st x = jazz feel,
2nd x double x jazz feel,
3rd x shuffle feel,
Coda
7x
Fine

BLUE CHA-CHA

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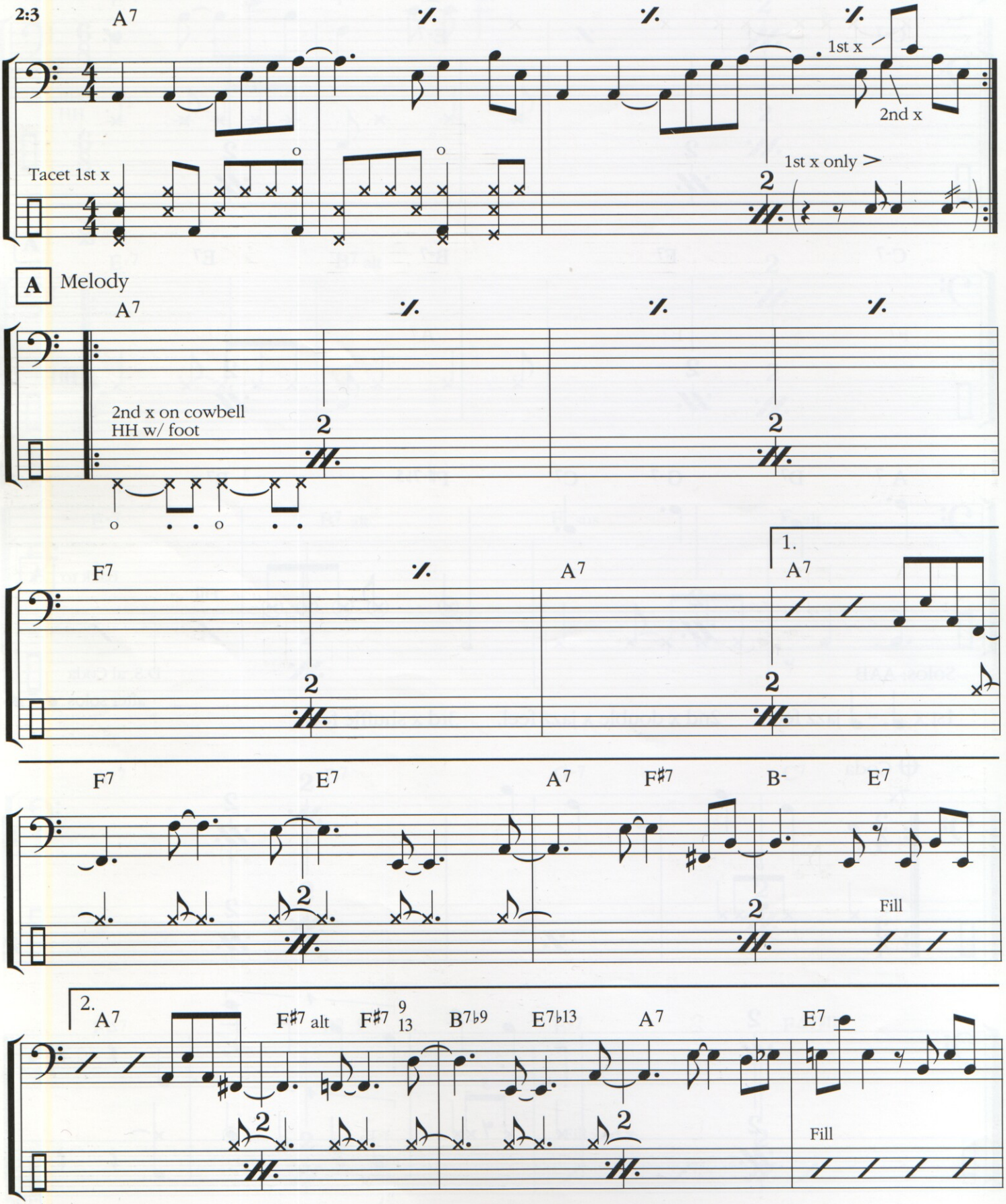
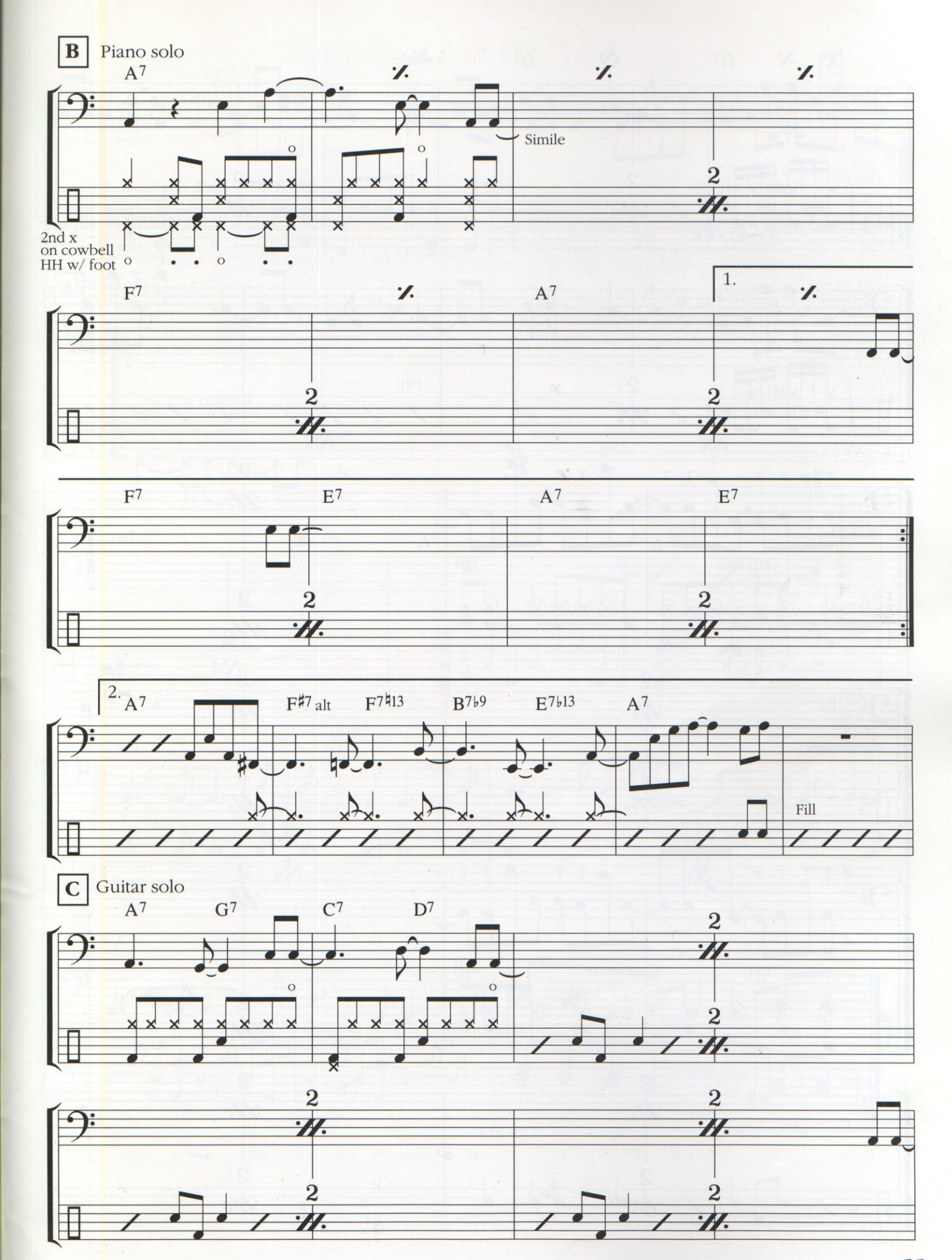
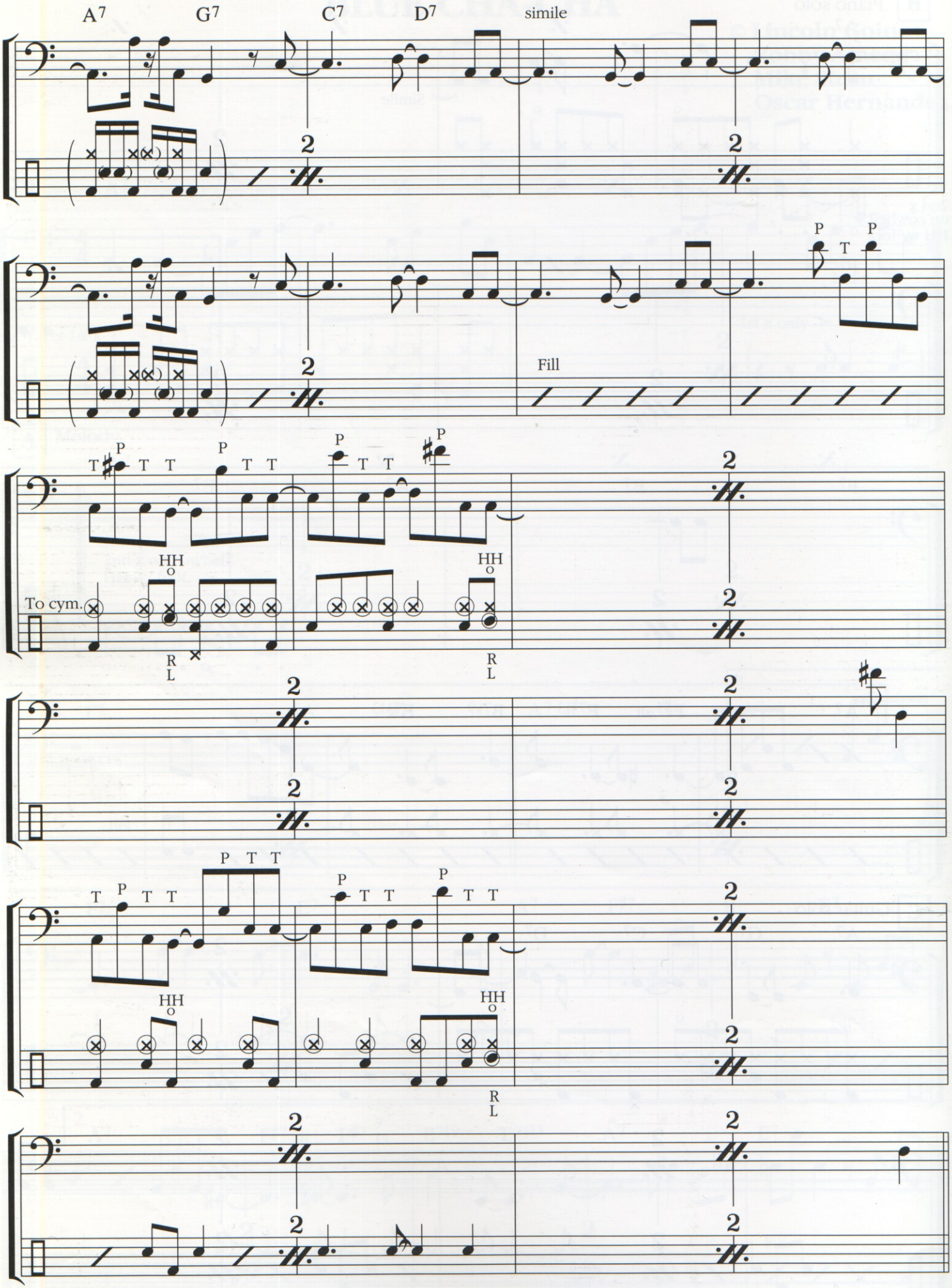
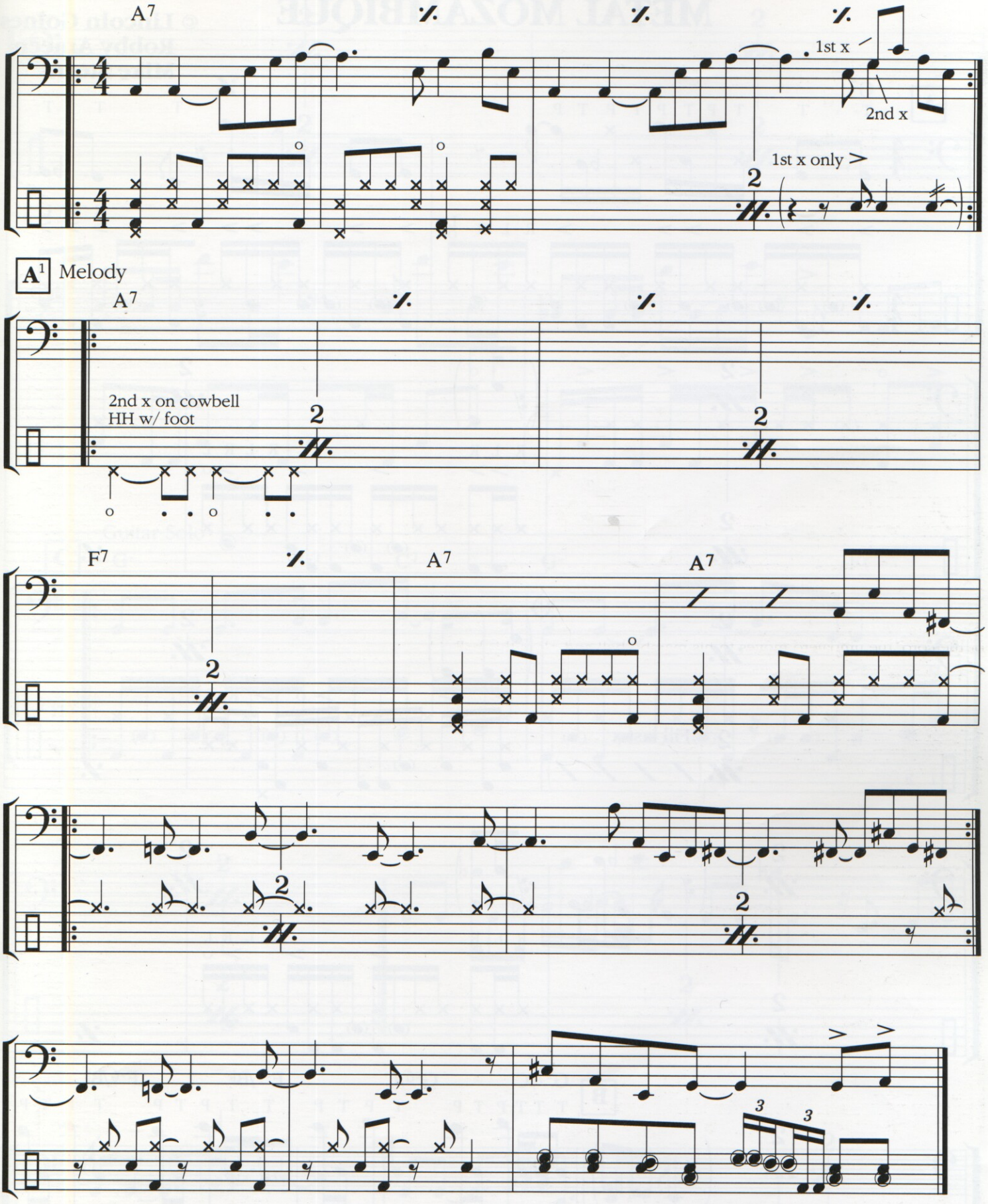
Mike Stern
Oscar Hernandez




B
Piano solo
A7
Simile
2nd x
on cowbell
HH w/ foot
F7
A7
1.
F7
E7
A7
E7
2.
A7
F#7 alt
F7♮13
B7♭9
E7♭13
A7
Fill
C
Guitar solo
A7
G7
C7
D7


A7
G7
C7
D7
simile
Fill
To cym.
HH
R
L


A7
1st x
2nd x
1st x only
A1 Melody
A7
2nd x on cowbell
HH w/ foot
F7
A7
A7

METAL MOZAMBIQUE

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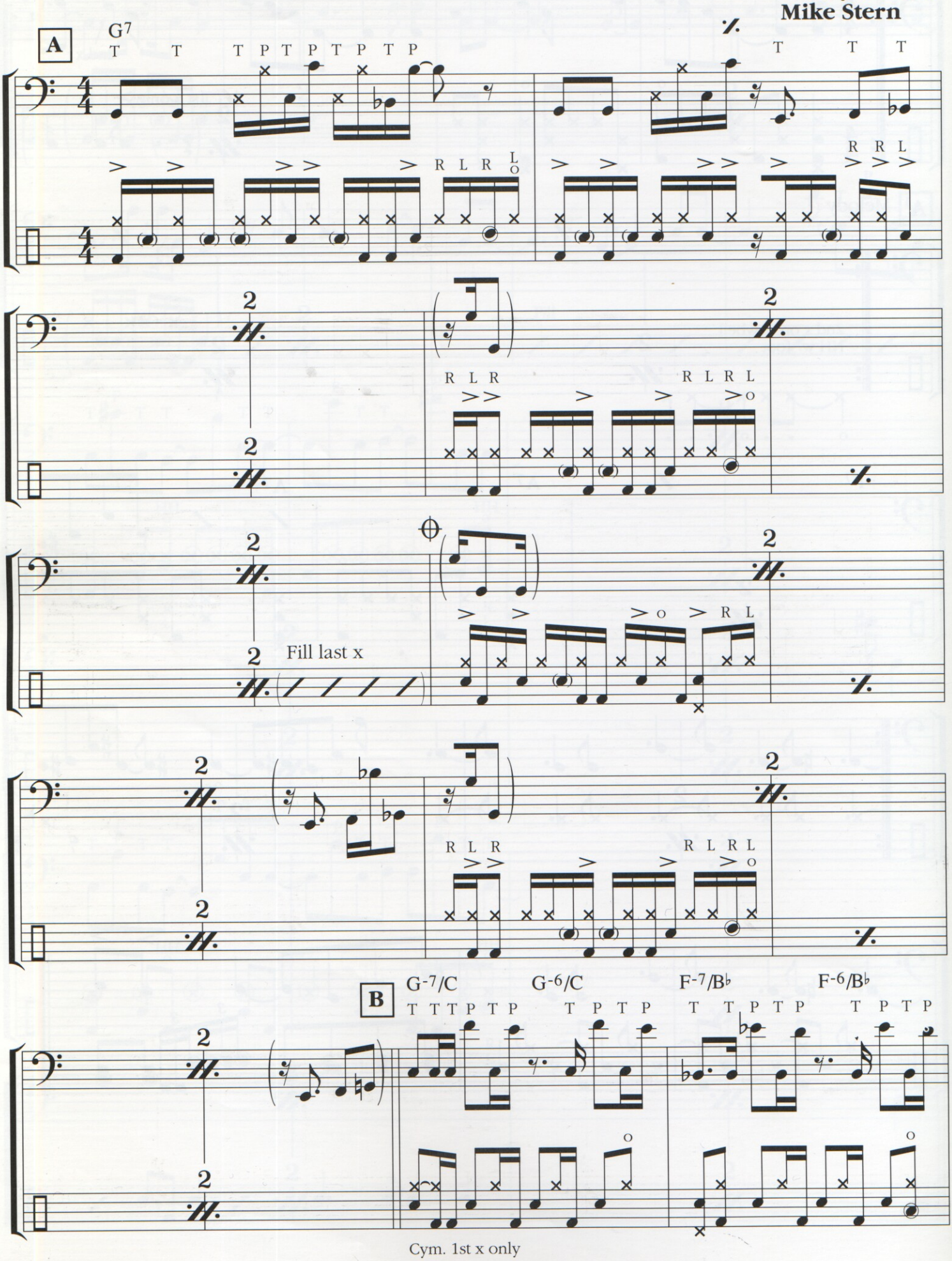
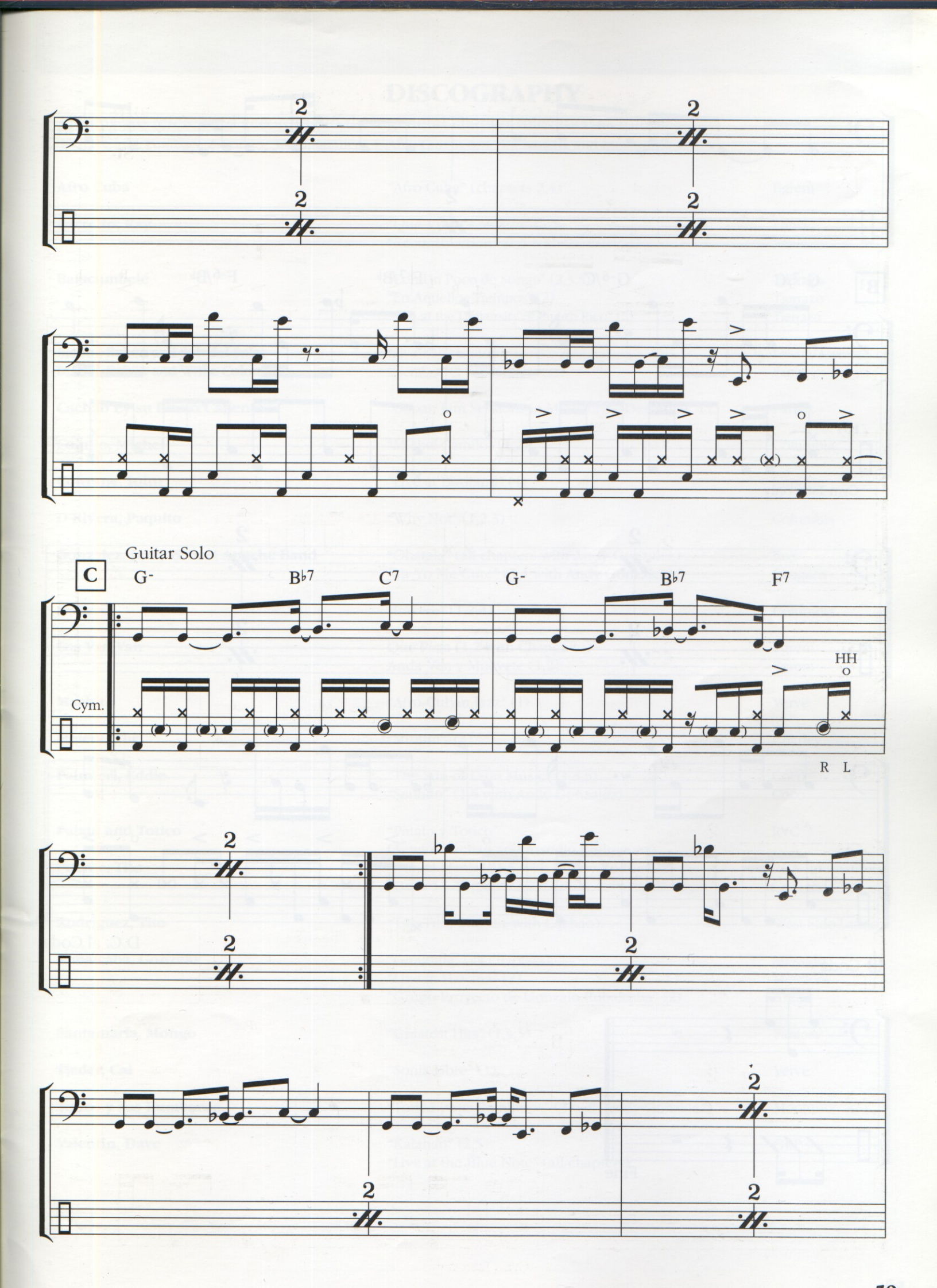
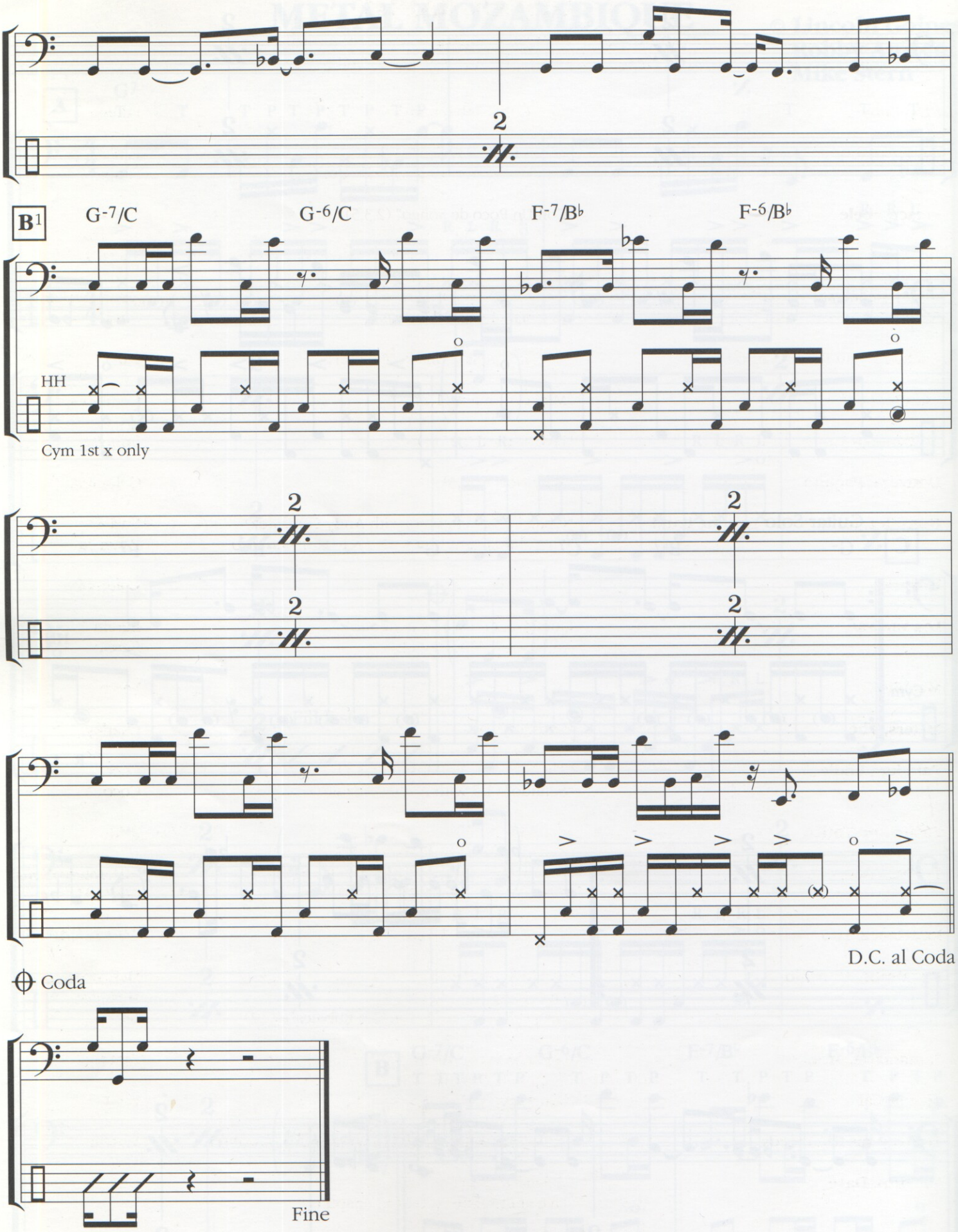
Robby Ameen
Mike Stern




Guitar Solo
C
G-
B♭7
C7
G-
B♭7
F7
Cym.
HH
R L


B1
G-7/C
G-6/C
F-7/B♭
F-6/B♭
HH
Cym 1st x only
D.C. al Coda
Coda
Fine

DISCOGRAPHY

Albums are referenced according to their general chapter relevance as follows:
1–Clave and Tumbao; 2–Songo; 3–Guaguanco; 4–Afro-Cuban 6/8; 5–Cha-Cha and Mozambique.

Afro Cuba	"Afro Cuba" (chapters 2,4)	Egrem
Barretto, Ray	"Que Viva La Musica" (1,5)	Fania
	"Reconstruction" (1,5 with Sal Cuevas)	Fania
Batacumbele	"Con Un Poco de Songo" (2,3,5)	Tierrazo
	"En Aquellos Tiempos" (2)	Tierrazo
	"Live at the University of Puerto Rico" (2)	Tierrazo
Blades, Rubén and Seis del Solar	"Live" (all chapters)	Electra/Asylum
Blades, Rubén and Willie Colon	"Siembra" (1 with Sal Cuevas)	Fania
Cachao Ey su Ritmo Caliente	"Cuban Jam Sessions in Miniature—Descargas" (1)	Panart
Camilo, Michel	"Michel Camilo" (1,2)	Columbia
Coltrane, John	"Live at Birdland" (4)	Impulse
D'Rivera, Paquito	"Why Not" (1,2,3)	Columbia
Gonzalez, Jerry & Fort Apache Band	"Obatala" (all chapters with Andy Gonzalez)	Enja
	"Ya Yo Me Cure" (3,4 with Andy Gonzalez)	Pangaea
Irakere	"Irakere" (1,2,4)	Columbia
Los Van Van	Que Pista (1,2 with Changuito)	Egrem
	Anda Ven y Muevete (1,2)	Egrem
Machito	"Afro-Cuban Jazz" (1)	Verve
Meters, The	"Struttin'" (3)	Charley
Palmieri, Eddie	"The Sun of Latin Music" (1,3,5)	Coco
	"Sentido" (1,5 with Andy Gonzalez)	Coco
Patato and Totico	"Patato y Totico" (3, with Cachao and Arsenio Rodreguez)	RVC
Puente, Tito	"Dance Mania" (1,5 with Bobby Rodriguez)	RCA International
	"Goza Mi Timbal" (1,2)	Concord
Rodriguez, Tito	"Tito,Tito, Tito" (1 with Cachao)	West Side Latino
Rubalcaba, Gonzalo	"Giraldilla" (all chapters)	Messidor
	"Live in Havana" (2)	Messidor
	"Grupo Proyecto de Gonzalo Rubalcaba" (2)	Areito
Santamaria, Mongo	"Greatest Hits" (1,4,5)	Fantasy
Tjader, Cal	"Sonia Libre" (1)	Verve
Totico y sus Rumberos	"Totico y sus Rumberos" (3 with Andy Gonzalez)	Montuno
Valentin, Dave	"Kalahari" (2,5)	GRP
	"Live at the Blue Note" (all chapters)	

LINCOLN GOINES

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Gato Barbieri	"Para Los Amigos"	Doctor Jazz
Bob Berg	"In The Shadows"	Denon
Michel Camilo	"Michel Camilo"	CBS
Scott Cossu	"Switchback"	Windham Hill
Paquito D'Rivera	"Why Not"	CBS
	"Celebration"	CBS
Dizzy Gillespie	"New Faces"	GRP
Dave Grusin	"Out Of the Shadows"	Arista
	"Night Line"	GRP
Vic Juris	"Horizon Drive"	Muse
Ryo Kawasaki	"Little Tree"	CBS/Sony
	"Live"	CBS/Sony
Tania Maria	"Come With Me"	Concord Jazz
	"Made In New York"	Manhattan
Vince Mendoza	"Start Here"	Fun House
Bob Mintzer	"Urban Contours"	DMP
	"Incredible Journey"	DMP
	"Spectrum"	DMP
Bob Moses	"Visit With the Great White Spirit"	Gramavision
Bill O'Connell	"Love For Sale"	Jazz City (Pony Canyon)
Mark Soskin	"Overjoyed"	Jazz City (Pony Canyon)
Leni Stern	"Secrets"	Enja
	"Closer to the Light"	Enja
Dave Valentin	"Dave Valentin/Herbie Mann Flute Summit"	GRP
	"Live at the Blue Note"	GRP
	"Mind Time"	GRP
	"Light Struck"	GRP
	"Jungle Garden"	GRP
	"Kalahari"	GRP
	"A GRP Christmas"	GRP

Lincoln Goines endorses ESP basses.

ROBBY AMEEN

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Rubén Blades	"Live"	Elektra
	"Nothing But the Truth"	Elektra
	"Agua de Luna"	Elektra
	"Escenas"	Elektra
	"Crossover Dreams"	Elektra
David Byrne	"Rei Momo"	Warner Brothers
Conjure	"Cab Calloway Stands in for the Moon"	American Clave
Scott Cossu	"Switchback"	Windham Hill
Dizzy Gillespie	"New Faces"	GRP
	"Endlessly"	Impulse
Paul Haines	"Darn it!"	American Clave
Kip Hanrahan	"Then She Turned So That..."	Pangaea
	"Days and Nights of Blue Luck Inverted"	Pangaea
Bill O'Connell	"Love For Sale"	Jazz City (Pony Canyon)
Eddie Palmieri	"Sueño"	Intuition
Daniel Ponce	"Change te Llama"	Island
Hilton Ruiz	"Strut"	RCA/Novus
Dave Valentin	"Two Amigos	GRP
	"Live at the Blue Note"	GRP
	"Mind Time"	GRP
	"Light Struck"	GRP
	"Jungle Garden"	GRP
	"Kalahari"	GRP
	"A GRP Christmas"	GRP

Robby Ameen endorses Pearl drums, Sabian cymbals, Vater sticks, Peter Engelhart Metal Percussion, and Latin Percusssion.